

The
**WEIRDEST
COUNTRY in
AMERICA**

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 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELER

October 2014

**DIVING
WITH
SHARKS**

**NAMIBIA
SAFARI CAMPS**

**THE SPIRIT
OF COLOMBIA**

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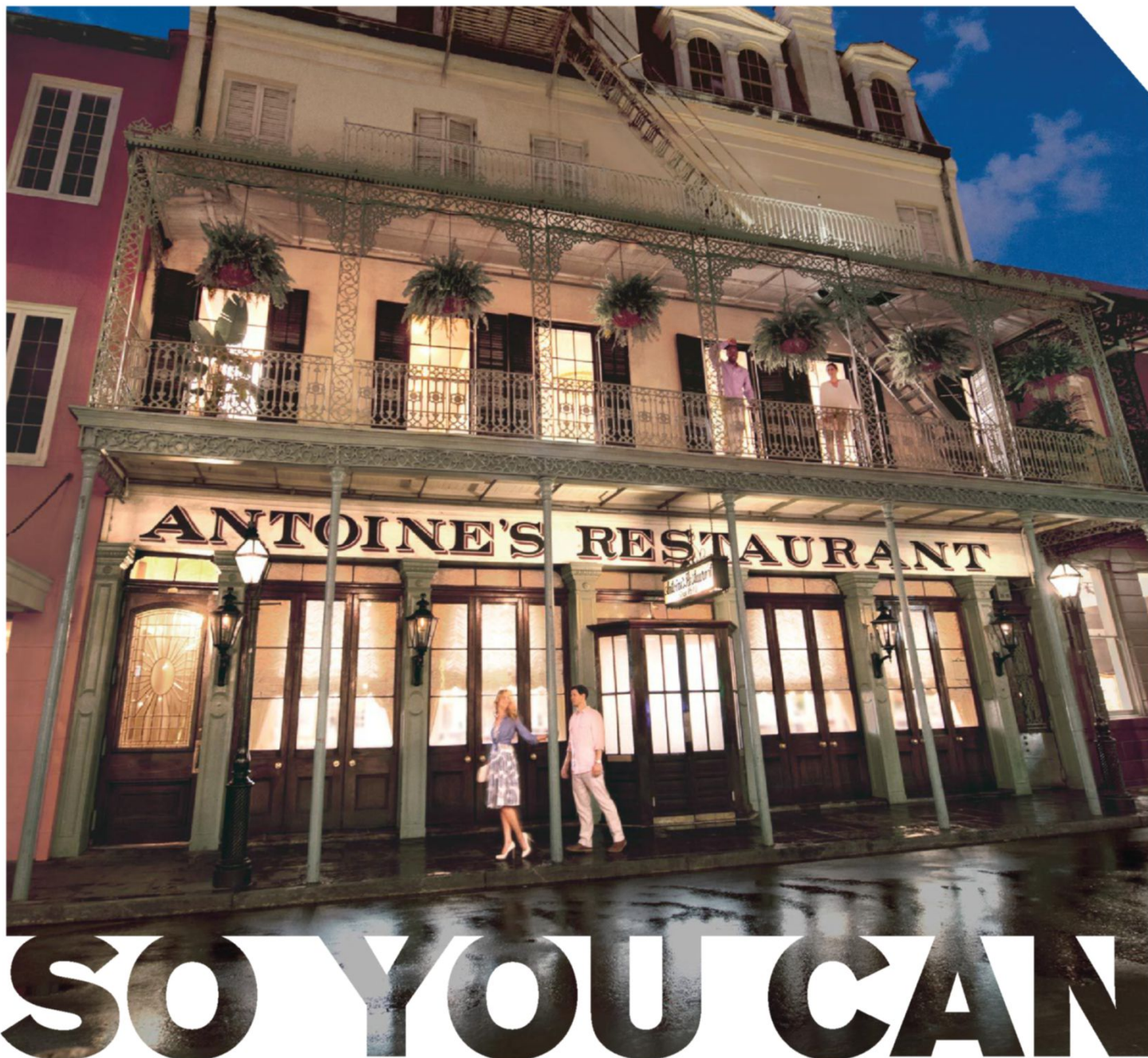
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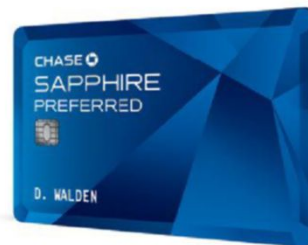
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Art makes a fresh statement at MAXXI, a museum in Rome featuring 21st-century works.



Cities of Tomorrow—Here Today

IN 1982 I LEFT NEW YORK CITY for a long stint in Knoxville, Tennessee. It was about to host the World's Fair in an attempt to increase its global profile, still smarting from the *Wall Street Journal's* dismissive opinion of it as a “scruffy little city on the Tennessee River.” Which it was. Today, this place once eager to become more citified has grown comfortable with its simple livability, its state leadership in green energy, its proximity to astonishing natural beauty, and its Appalachian cultural and musical roots. (In fact, it recently announced the first annual Scruffy City Comedy Festival, to be held this November.)

There was a time when I could not wait to leave Knoxville; today I would love to return there to live. It symbolizes how cities, and what we value in them, are evolving: All of the cities I have called home—including Montreal, London, San Francisco, New York, and Washington, D.C.—are now preserving their essential character while adapting to a changing world.

Traditionally we have molded our lives to

accommodate the physical dictates of cities. That is changing—fast. Our cities increasingly are reflecting the architecture and aspirations of tomorrow in their buildings, street life, social connectivity, technologies, transportation systems—even how they welcome and entertain travelers. From creative lighting and green spaces to “living buildings” and the repurposing of once abandoned structures, we’re making our cities work harder for us and, in the process, reshaping them to better accommodate our evolving lifestyles. By 2050, it’s predicted, 70 percent of the world will live in cities. Today hotbeds of innovation and imagination, cities in the future also will be easier, more nurturing places to live and work. On page 58 we offer a glimpse of how cities are changing—and how the changes might change us.

Look for our new book, *World's Best Cities*, which celebrates 220 great destinations—from Portland and Paris to Miami and Mumbai.

— KEITH BELLOWS

Traditionally we have molded our lives to accommodate the physical dictates of cities. That is changing—fast. Now we make our cities work harder for us.

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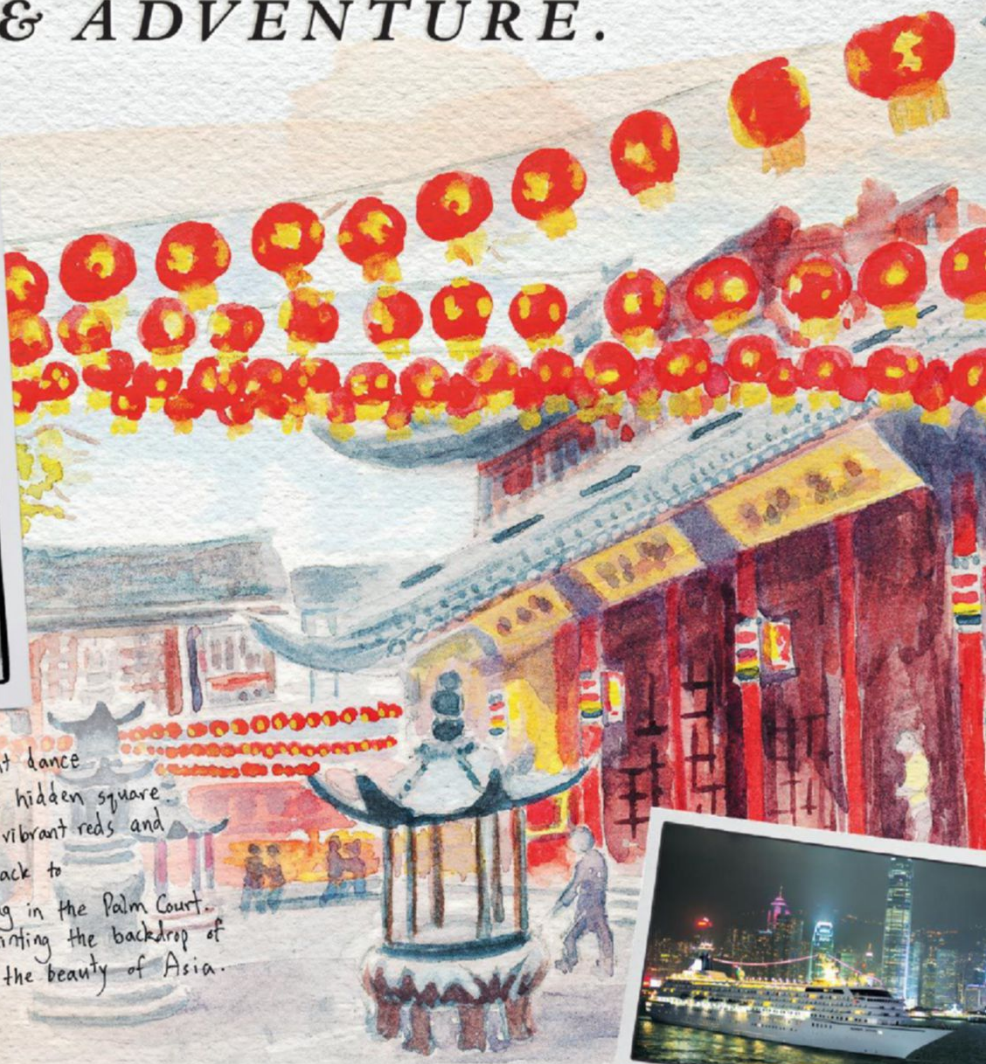
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Tea harvest time in Darjeeling, India

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ANDREW MCCARTHY'S "Steeped in Darjeeling" (June/July 2014) stirred up old memories for Norma Pycock McClintic of **Richmond, Va.**

"Thank you for a beautiful article about a part of the world that's dear to me. My father was a tea planter in Assam, and my sister and I were born there. My first memory was being carried in a wicker chair into a hill station en route to Darjeeling, where we evacuated during World War II. I was small, but I remember the impressive Kanchenjunga mountain, which I had the pleasure of seeing again from the air in 2005 when my husband and I flew from Delhi to Bhutan. One tends to have a picture of luxury in those colonial days in India, but life surrounded by deadly animals was precarious. I remember a leopard stalking the bungalow, and its capture, too."

BON VOYAGE For those who think Facebook is good only for baby photos and BuzzFeed quizzes, consider the power of

our two-million-strong travel community. We recently posed a question to those followers about the best things to do in Quebec City. The responses fill out a trip itinerary: "Start with breakfast at L'Accent, tour the walled city by foot during the day, stopping along the way at the many confectionary shops, followed by dinner and drinks at Pub St.-Patrick. Then take a mid-night ride down the giant slide near the Parliament Building," suggested Holly J. Baldwin. Visiting the Château Frontenac as well as the aquarium made Nathalie Laveault's short list, while several readers chimed in to call the winter holidays the city's most magical time of year. "Old Quebec is the best place to spend a white Christmas, with all the lights and snow and people caroling on the streets," commented Francisca Kurniawan.

As for a year-round must-see, Scott Shedd added, "If you can't make it to Buckingham Palace in London, the Citadel is my favorite runner-up in North America."

"Vaddey Ratner's article confirms my impressions from several trips to Cambodia: It is the land of survivors."

—CYNTHIA BURDGE ON MY CITY: PHNOM PENH (JUNE/JULY 2014)

NOMAD NO MORE As *Traveler's* Digital Nomad for the past five years, Andrew Evans traveled to all seven continents—sometimes in the span of a single year—and shared his adventures in real time in nearly 600 blog posts and roughly 37,500 tweets. When he recently announced that he was going to stay home for a change, blog fans gushed with support: "You opened all our eyes to the joys of the beyond," praised one reader, while longtime follower Larissa Douglass of **Canada** said: "I'll never forget reading about the dolphins swimming next to your bus windows [on a ferry] at Cape Horn. You entered a gateway to a new world, bringing Nat Geo into the next millennium."



BIRD BRAINS

A sure way to ruffle feathers? For starters, misidentify an ibis (above) as an egret, as we did in a photo caption in the June/July 2014 issue ("In Praise of the American Beach Town"). Another way to get wings flapping: Omit Jersey from a list of top shores.

JUSTIN GUARIGLIA (PEOPLE), STEVE GETTLE/GETTY IMAGES (BIRD)

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FIELD NOTES PICTURE-PERFECT ISLANDS

In a biodiversity hotspot such as the Galápagos Islands, travelers face a spectacular dilemma: how to capture its endless wildlife photo ops (like the puffed-up frigatebird at left). That's where National Geographic photo expeditions enter the picture, with trip experts revealing tricks for getting the best shots. Former *Traveler* photo editor Krista Rossow suggests changing perspective to an

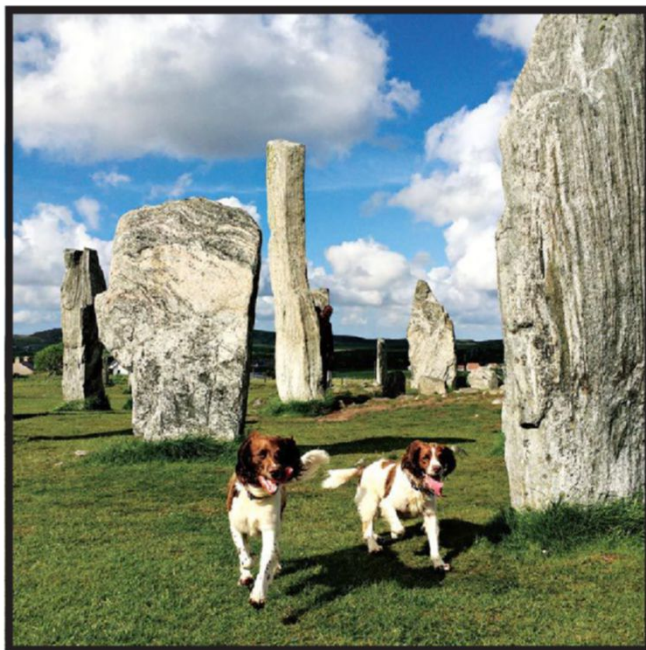
animal's level. "For iguanas or giant tortoises, that can mean lying on your belly or kneeling—bring kneepads! Getting lower can also isolate a subject against water, sky, or foliage so it stands out against the background." ■ NATIONALGEOGRAPHICEXPEDITIONS.COM/PHOTOTRIPS

JUST BACK

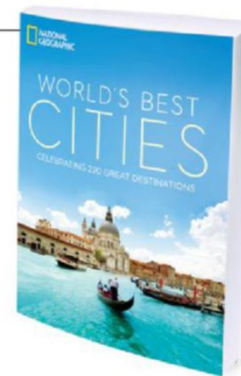
Scotland's Outer Hebrides by Bike

Only a ferry ride away from the mainland, this archipelago feels far removed in time and temperament, with few tourists to mar one's *Outlander* fantasies. The Western Isles, as they're called, lie on Europe's edge, linked to North America geologically and to the Irish Gaels culturally. Dotting the coast are glistening beaches, imposing headlands (below), and Neolithic sites including the Calanais standing stones (right), older than Stonehenge. I slept in quirky inns such as the Isle of Barra Beach Hotel, the supposed first refuge of the deposed shah of Iran in 1979, and visited shops where designers put mod spins on Harris tweed (below right). Aye, and I found enough clan castles, Iron Age broch ruins, peat moors, and machair grasslands to fill a romance novel.

—Norie Quintos



Traveler Executive Editor Norie Quintos (@noriecicerone) cycled the length of the archipelago over four days on a small-group bicycle tour (below center), posting photo updates to Instagram along the way. Follow @natgeotravel for more on-the-go photos from staff and contributors.



Q&A

It's an Urban Thing

National Geographic's latest coffee-table must-have, *World's Best Cities*, travels to 220 top metropolises, from Boston to Bangkok. We checked in with our Urban Insider, Annie Fitzsimmons, who wrote the book's foreword, for a few city tips:

What's your favorite way to see a landmark? Find both a high point with a great view and also a low angle. In New York, the Top of the Rock feels like the deck of an art deco cruise liner; from here you can see the Empire State Building. For a view from below, go to East 21st Street and Broadway, near the Flatiron Building.

How do you prepare for a new city? Start planning even before you have a trip on the calendar. I collect clippings and tweets all the time. Try to read up on history and current politics, too, so you can have more informed conversations.

Any city rituals? Become a regular somewhere while you're in town. Visiting every day is a way to learn the rhythm of a place.

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WHERE TO GO NOW

BEST OF THE WORLD

In Connecticut,
an art installation fogs
over Philip Johnson's
Glass House.

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4RUNNER 2014

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Like an oversize display box, Connecticut's Glass House preserves the interior as Philip Johnson lived in it.



A Touch of Glass in Connecticut

IN THE BEDROOM COMMUNITY of New Canaan, Connecticut, Philip Johnson's landmark Glass House disappears and then rises from fog. Atop this wooded promontory where Johnson often retreated from 1949 until his death in 2005, Japanese artist Fujiko Nakaya choreographed 600 water nozzles for "Veil," a hide-and-reveal sequence that once each hour envelops the transparent house (pictured on page 13). In the words of Glass House director Henry Urbach, Nakaya's art installation transforms "a timeless icon into something ephemeral." **ART 101** Coining the term "International Style," Johnson mounted the first U.S. exhibition of modern architecture in 1932. **HOW TO VISIT** Open for the season through November 30, this National Trust for Historic Preservation property offers tours and, new in 2014, self-guided walks. Visitors can explore the famed architect's house, a sculpture gallery, a paintings gallery with rotating walls, and a whimsical structure known as Da Monsta. **BEHIND DOORS** In Johnson's "viewing platform," a brick cylinder bathroom is the only space without a view. —JEAN LAWLOR COHEN

ATLAS

New Canaan, Connecticut



Johnson is said to have liked petting his favorite corner of the warped Da Monsta building to soothe "the monster."

ANDY ROMER/THE GLASS HOUSE; INTERNATIONAL MAPPING



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A Canal St. Martin bakery

Where the Young and Hungry Go in Paris

THE PARIS NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND the Canal St. Martin was long known more for decaying warehouses than for its wrought iron bridges. Then came the popular movie *Amélie*, with its title character skipping stones along the nearly three-mile-long canal, and the tree-lined waterfront in the 10th arrondissement became a perennial up-and-comer. Finally, the tide has turned for the quartier, and its rough edges have been smoothed out for picnics and promenades. “Like Shoreditch in London, or Williamsburg in New York, it’s where the new things are being created in Paris,” says business owner Mickael Benichou. **SWEET SPOT** Industrial-chic Liberté bakery puts new spins on old favorites. Order the “bobo au rhum” dessert, its name a nod to the neighborhood’s hipsters, whom Parisians call “bourgeois bohémians” or “bobos.” **SHOW TIME** Take the pulse of the indie music scene at Point Éphémère. **SAVE THE DATE** During the art-centric Nuit Blanche (“white night”) on the first Saturday of October, Paris parties all night in gallery-rich districts such as Canal St. Martin. —AMANDA RUGGERI

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Paris, France



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Life Is More Than a Beach in Fiji

ON A RAFT FLOATING down Fiji's Upper Navua River gorge, under dangling 100-foot vines, time stops. Like a tropical Grand Canyon, this gorge slices through the volcanic heart of Viti Levu—the largest island of the Fijian archipelago—and redefines island paradise. **GOOD CALL** The Upper Navua represents one of the most unique conservation cooperatives in the world, and one of the only protected rivers in the South Pacific. In 2000, an alliance of nine local leaders, two villages, a logging company, and a government entity placed a ban on logging, mining, and road construction within 200 meters (656 feet) of either side of the river's lapping waters. **HIT THE SLOTS** Take to one of the longest navigable slot canyons in the world, at roughly 18 miles long. Sheer walls rocket 150 feet skyward as green, Class 2 and 3 rapids rush through 20-foot-wide channels. Waterfalls and constant spray pour from the jungle above, keeping this oasis teeming with life. **HOW TO EXPLORE** On day-trips led by Rivers Fiji, laughing and singing local guides share legends of warfare and love. —PETER MCBRIDE

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Upper Navua River, Fiji

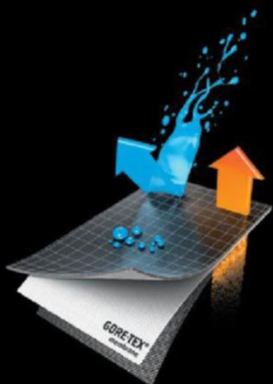


Fiji's national drink, made from kava root, traditionally is served in "high tide" (full) or "low tide" (half) portions.

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Sand and smiles on a Qingdao beach

China's Fountain of Life

BLUE SKIES PREVAIL IN Qingdao, a seaside metropolis that keeps topping livability lists in China, with its inviting boardwalks, shaded streets and parks, and German colonial architecture. Just to the east beckon the hiking trails of the Lao Shan Scenic Area, where chains of sapphire pools bubble with springwater and natural mist shrouds granite peaks. In ancient times, Taoist priests deemed this the home of immortal beings and the water sacred. **DRINK THE WATER** Tap the longevity well on Taiqing Gong's grounds, a sprawling complex of temples and cypress trees. Or try the city's famed beer, Tsingtao, made with water from the same source. **LIQUID COURAGE** At Huangdao Lu's street market in Old Town, order Tsingtao by the pitcher or bag, or green tea grown on the slopes of Lao Shan.

WRITTEN IN STONE Look for the ode to Qingdao carved into a rock in Lao Shan by celebrated poet Yu Dafu. **HARVEST TIME** On the full moon around the fall equinox, families gather and share moon cakes. Join the crowds hiking up Zhongshan Park's peak for the best view of the clear night sky. —TIENTLON HO

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Qingdao, China



In the 1950s, Tsingtao beer marketed itself as a health drink: "Not only is it harmless, it strengthens the body!"

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Dylan Thomas in 1946

All Lit Up on the Coast of Wales

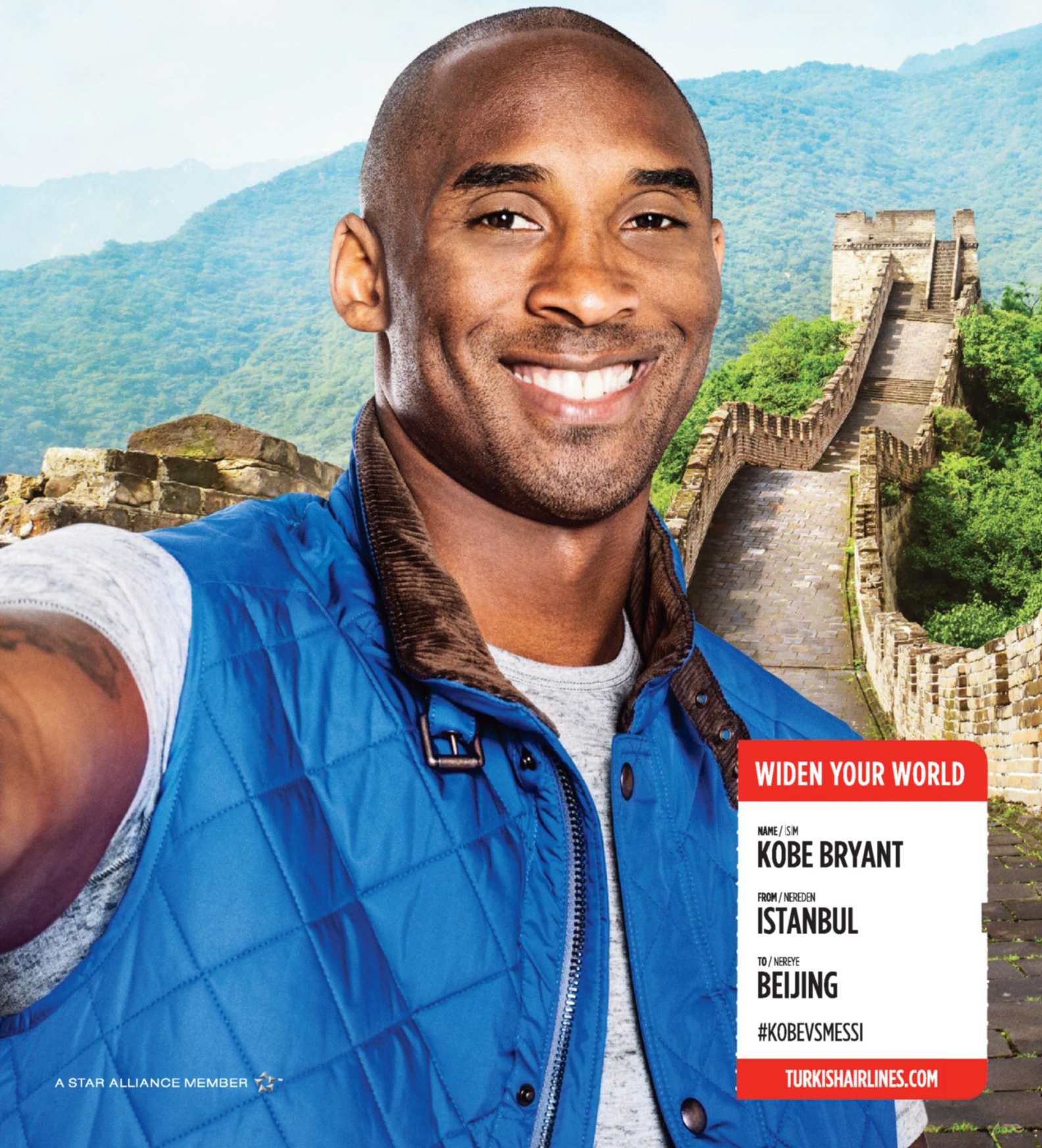
IN OCTOBER THE LITERARY world celebrates the 100th birthday of the late Dylan Thomas. Few places meant more to the Welsh poet than Swansea, on Wales's southwest coast. "This sea-town was my world," he wrote of the "ugly lovely" place where he grew up and wrote the majority of his life's work. **DYLAN MANIA** October 24-26, catch local singers/songwriters performing at the Do Not Go Gentle festival—a contemporary take on Thomas's lifestyle here as part of the arty Kardomah Gang—followed by the 36-hour "Dylathon" reading October 26-27 at the Swansea Grand Theatre. Plus, peruse handwritten manuscripts at the Dylan Thomas Centre. **WHERE TO STAY** Overnight at Thomas's birthplace, the restored Edwardian house at Number 5 Cwmdonkin Drive. A gramophone, scrunched balls of paper, and half-smoked Woodbines set the scene, as does the window vantage of ships that appear, as Thomas wrote, to "sail across rooftops." **POETIC LICENSE** Drive west from Swansea to the sandy surf spots and rocky coves of the Gower Peninsula, one of Britain's most scenic coastlines. —ABIGAIL KING

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Swansea, Wales



Contrary to myth, Bob Dylan did not give himself the Welsh poet's name, but actor Pierce Brosnan did christen his son Dylan Thomas.



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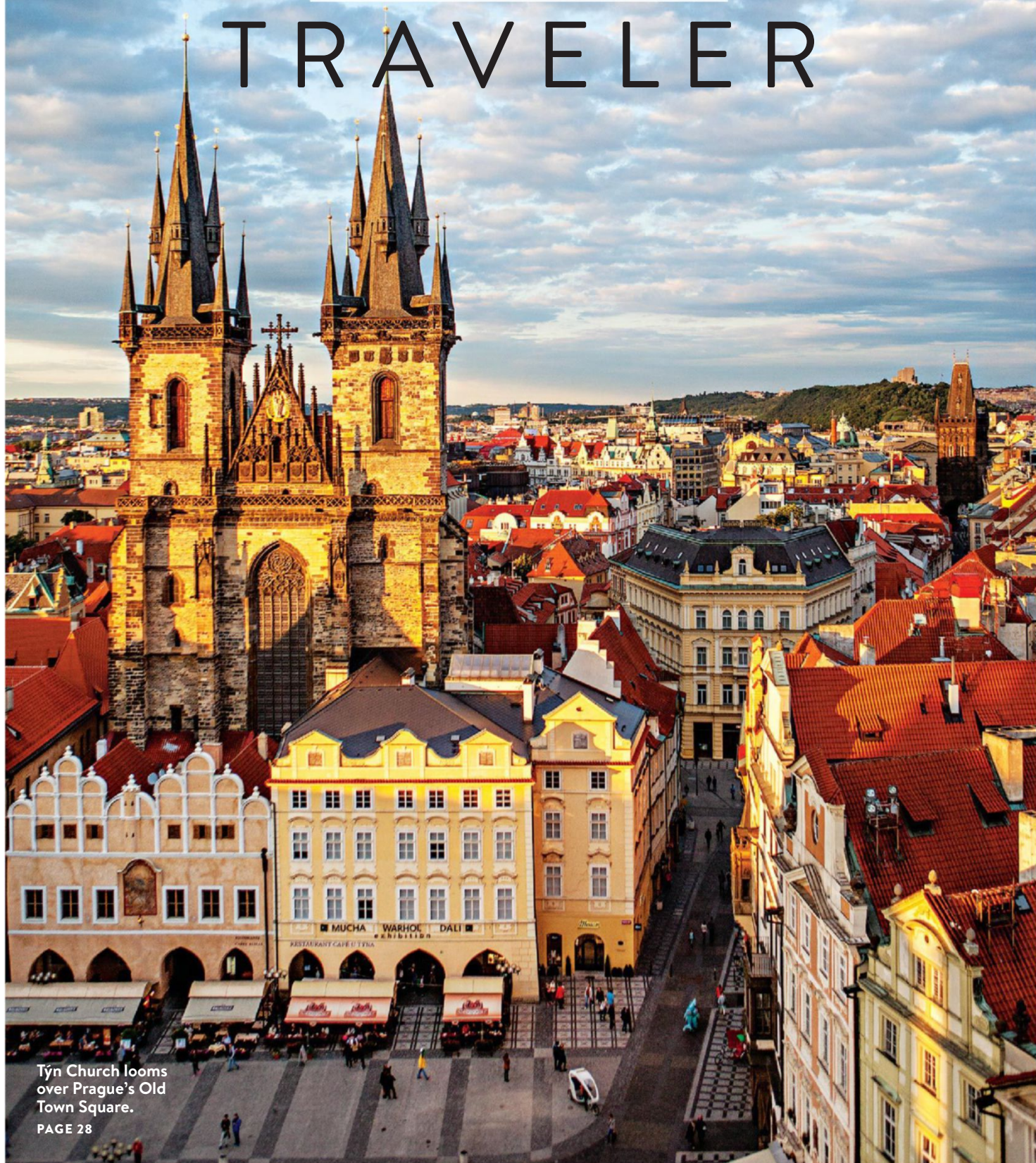


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NAVIGATING THE GLOBE

SMART TRAVELER



Týn Church looms
over Prague's Old
Town Square.
PAGE 28



A guitarist plays at Prague's John Lennon Wall.

MY CITY

A Metamorphosis in Prague

MUSICIANS AND MYSTICS MINGLE IN THE CZECH CAPITAL By PETER SÍS

I WAS WORKING on an animated film in Los Angeles in 1982 when I was ordered back to Prague by the communist Czech government. I wanted to finish my film and was tired of the government telling me what to do, so I decided not to return even though I knew this meant I might not see my family again. Then, in 1989, I became a U.S. citizen, and a few months later the Berlin Wall fell. I could once again go home.

Whenever I visit, I try to swim against time, not to recall the oppressive fortress that used to be Prague but to reconnect with the favorite places of my childhood.

Our family home is located on

ATLAS

Prague, Czech Republic



Washington Irving, whose 1820 short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" echoes Prague's ages-old tale of the "Headless Templar," visited and sketched the city in 1837.

the main route through historic Prague, on Nerudova Street in the Hradčany Castle District. It had been the gatehouse for the Prague Castle and goes back to the 14th century. My first walk in Prague is usually up the street to the castle—the seat of kings, emperors, dictators, and presidents. I like to go there in the evening. A quiet alley behind the castle, Nový Svět, is where the Danish Renaissance astronomer Tycho Brahe lived. He came to Prague as a guest of Emperor Rudolf II, a patron of the arts and sciences. Brahe was just one of the many astronomers, mystics, and alchemists that the emperor

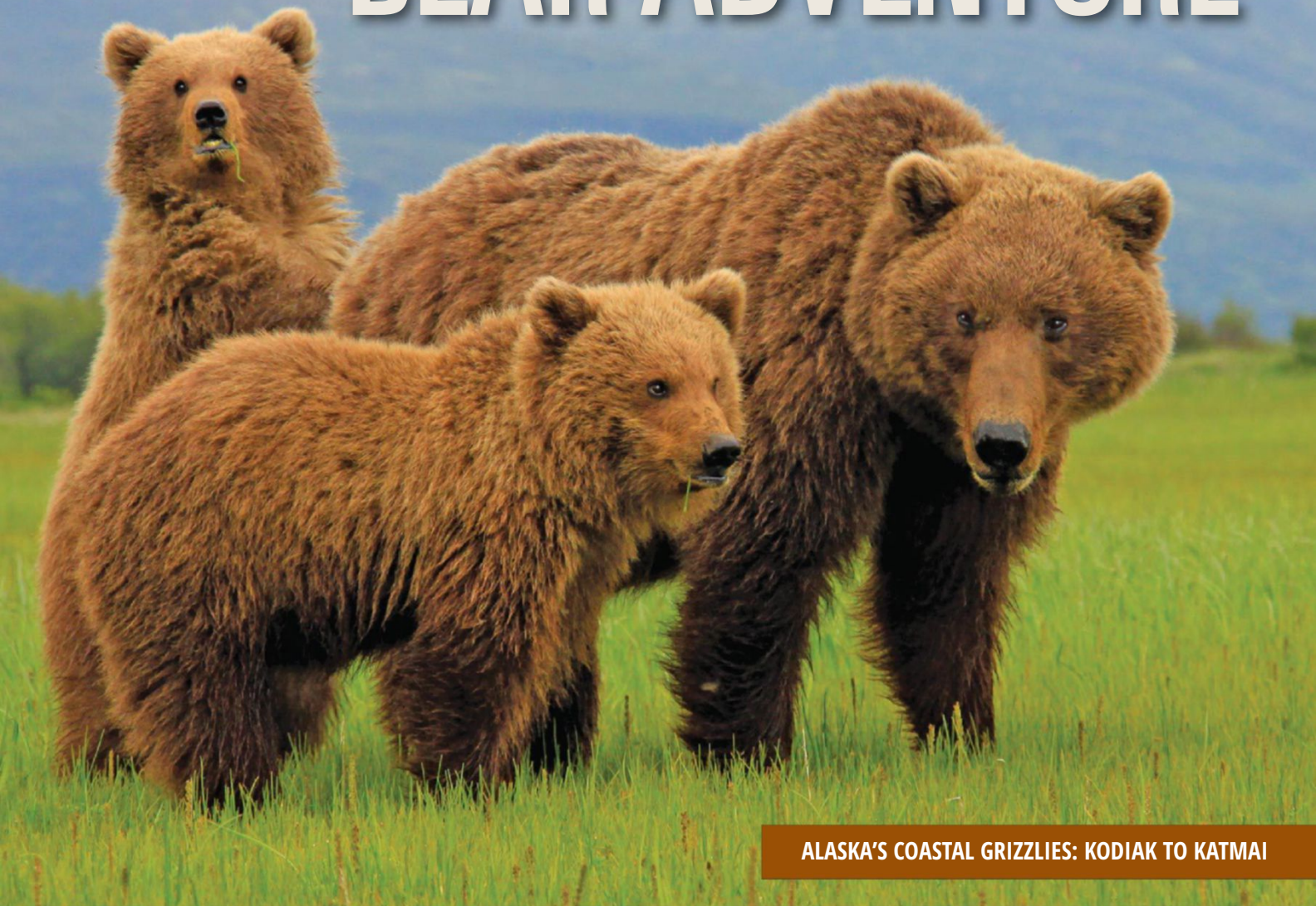
invited to his Prague court.

Across from Brahe's house, a discreet entrance leads to the lush charms of Deer Moat, a park with meadows, benches, winding paths, and the remains of the emperor's greenhouse, called Fig House. You can almost see the shadows of the deer, bears, even lions that Emperor Rudolf II kept here. He was told that when his favorite lion died he would too, and that's what happened.

Prague Castle looms above Deer Moat, and I enter it through the East Gate. With the crowds gone, I feel like a time traveler walking along the Golden Lane—a street of colorful small houses

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Sportfishing is a favorite activity off Islamorada.

admire the gumbo-limbo, strangler fig, and other exotic flora. Or visit Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological State Park to behold a reef without getting wet.

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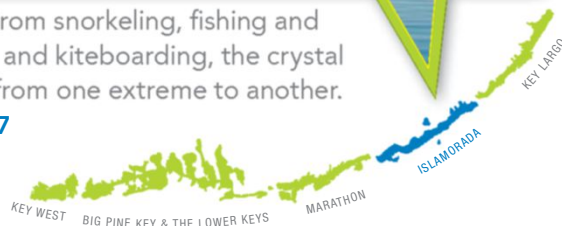
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Exploring Kimberley's Hunter River up close. Photo by Brent Stephenson

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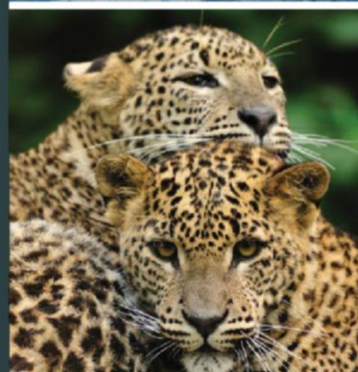
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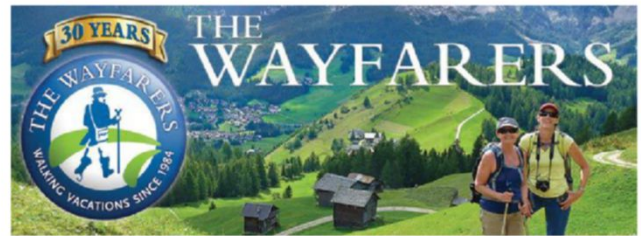


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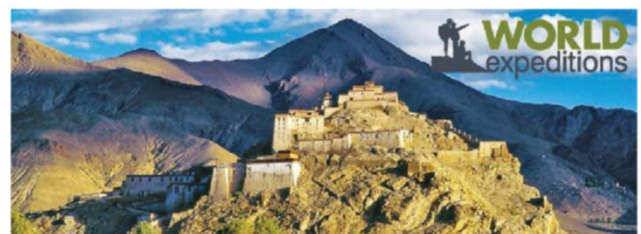
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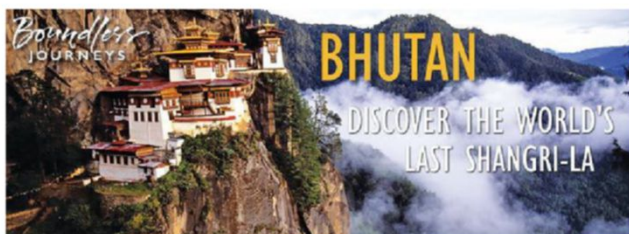
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A person in a black wetsuit and red life vest is captured mid-air, jumping off a rocky cliff. The person's arms are outstretched, and their legs are bent. The cliff is made of dark, layered rock and is covered with green moss and small yellow flowers. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The water at the bottom of the cliff is dark and turbulent.

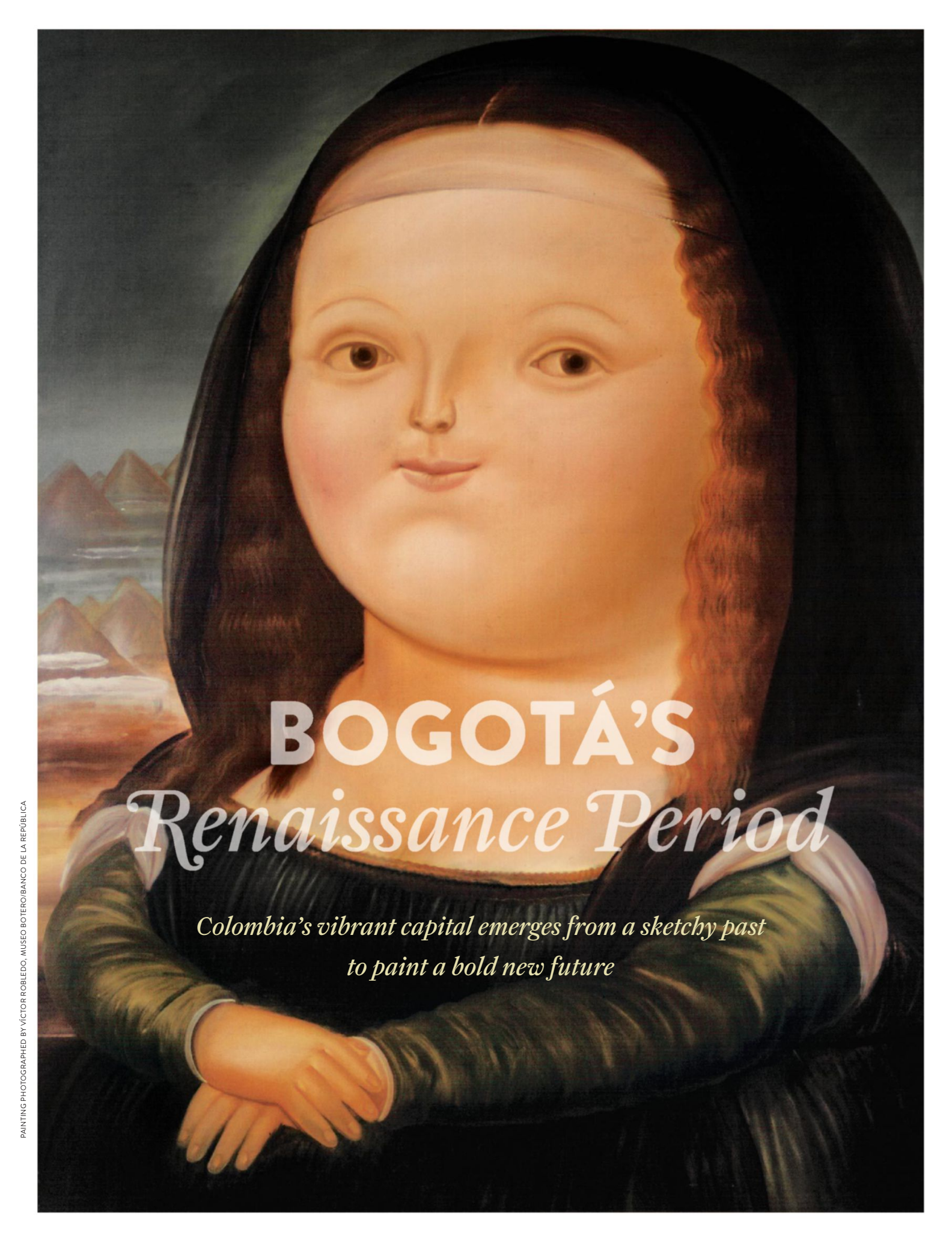
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Echo of Spain, a colonial bell tower looks out on Bogotá from the top of Monserrate. Works (opposite) by Colombian artist Fernando Botero draw crowds to Bogotá's Botero Museum.





BOGOTÁ'S *Renaissance Period*

*Colombia's vibrant capital emerges from a sketchy past
to paint a bold new future*



Classic Colombian cooking at the Puerta de la Tradición restaurant casts back to Bogotá's early days. All saddled up, a llama (opposite) awaits riders on the historic Plaza de Bolívar.

I'm an impatient museumgoer, not big on jostling with others in hushed halls to see paintings that look, to me, just as good in a book as on canvas. But for one artist I make an exception: Fernando Botero, “the most Colombian of Colombian artists,” as he styles himself. It may be asserted that Botero has single-handedly put Colombia on the world map of art. It is a fact that he put the home of the Museo Botero (Botero Museum), in Colombia’s capital, Bogotá, on my personal radar.

From the lookout atop 10,341-foot-high Monserrate this summer evening, Bogotá resembles a glittering crazy quilt tessellated with flickering lights and obsidian shadows. The vista, magnificent in scale, awes. My eye searches for the Botero Museum, somewhere directly below, in the Candelaria quarter, the city’s colonial heart.

Only 15 years ago Bogotá was being convulsed by a decades-long civil war. Left-wing guerrillas, many from Colombia’s working class, were gunning down officials and seizing government buildings; right-wing paramilitaries were killing leftists. And, of course, revenues from narcotics enriched a few beyond all imagination; think Pablo Escobar, the now deceased chief of the Medellín cartel, with his Learjet, submarines, and zoo.

“Things are different now, very different,” says my Bogotá

friend Carla Baquero, a 33-year-old graphic artist, as we walk along the lookout’s steep path to the cable car for the ten-minute descent to the city. The car sways to life, and we slide almost vertically toward the darkest part of the otherwise bright cityscape: La Candelaria. The quarter, she tells me as she brushes aside a stray black curl, “is where Colombian poets have always lived and where you still feel the Bogotá of Simón Bolívar,” the heroized 19th-century liberator of Colombia. The larger-than-life art of Fernando Botero couldn’t find a more appropriate home.

Baquero and I reach the entrance to the Museo Botero, which occupies a colonial residence on Calle 11. I’m intent on seeing a Botero painting that has long intrigued me: “Pareja Bailando” (“Couple Dancing”). It depicts a duo mid-step, she



with horselike haunches and a mane of reddish hair, he pale-skinned and rotund. We find the artwork in a room devoted to Botero (the museum also shows works by other modern artists, including Pablo Picasso and Robert Motherwell). Like most Botero subjects, the two appear obese. However, the artist wouldn't term them so: For him, they're possessed of a *volumen* hinting at a surfeit of sensuality, a Colombian trait. All appears normal in the scene. Then I notice that neither figure is reflected in the mirror behind them—a vampiric portent of perdition?—and that the man is unshaven, suggesting this may be a brothel. Things are only superficially as they should be, intimating layers invisible to a casual observer.

"In his work," Baquero says, "Botero hints at the problems in our history, the corruption, the falsity in our private lives, the violence beneath the surface."

We stop at "Una Familia," a portrait of what appears to be a normal family, though the wife, husband, and two children look humorously corpulent. (They can't be obese, Baquero notes; no folds crease their body fat, confirmation, perhaps, of Botero's explanation of "volume.") Then Baquero points to telling details.

"The man has two wedding rings, which suggests he may be cheating. The woman seems to have a wandering eye, which for some Colombians means she can't be trusted, so she too may be cheating. And look at how ugly the family dog is; we think a dog's character reflects that of its master." I notice a scarlet snake in a tree behind them, poised to bite the woman. "That's Catholic iconography," Baquero observes, another implication that the two are sinners. Bogotá, Botero gives us to think, is, like the rest of Colombia, Catholic yet sensuous. Much is concealed for religious propriety's sake.

Yet gazing at his lighthearted "Man on Horseback" (the man looks as heavy as the horse), I sense a playfulness, a Colombian passion for outsize moments and distrust of seriousness. Botero paints so deftly, even daftly, that his oeuvre, like Bogotá, occupies a middle area between beaux arts and pop art, or, in culinary terms, between an elegant tarte tatin and Pop-Tarts.

I HAVE ALWAYS FELT BOGOTÁ was in my blood. Maybe it's ascribable to a familial tie to the city: My mother spent a few years here as a teenager, in a grand *casa señorial* somewhere on

a mist-mantled mountainside above town, where, she told me wistfully, she was never happier.

In 2009, I began visiting Colombia to research a book about Bolívar, the flamboyant liberator of five countries from Spanish rule. With "El Libertador" I felt a visceral bond: His life was as peripatetic as my own, his wanderlust as insatiable, his sense of history as tragic. I fell in love with Bogotá, set dramatically beneath the steep-sloped Andes, its climate often forlornly cool and rainy, its people, emerging from decades of terror, eager to learn about the world and have others learn about them. Most of all, I fell in love with the colorfully painted Candelaria neighborhood, cradle of Colombia's

most recent renaissance, where poncho-clad campesinos share sidewalks with stylishly dressed (and newly relaxed) elites, and horse-drawn carts rattle alongside sports cars. By immersing myself in its life on this visit and meeting Candelarianos who are helping revive their city, I am hoping I will find my own place in this proud Latin culture—and derive inspiration for another book, which would come from deeper within me. I'm hoping, in other words, that maybe some of Colombia's rebirth will rub off on me—and that I will make the city my own.

La Candelaria remains an outpost of antiquity on the east edge of new Bogotá's shambolic urban sprawl spreading north and west from the Andes' base. The city originated here, either at the stately Plaza de Bolívar—where Colombia's capitol and supreme court preside—or by the quaint Plazoleta del Chorro de Quevedo, with its marijuana-scented alleys and folksy raconteurs.

Today mostly a picturesque warren of cobbled streets and low, gable-roofed homes and businesses, La Candelaria long suffered infamy as a dilapidated, dangerous no-go zone sheltering El Cartucho, one of Bogotá's biggest drug markets (now a public park). The area's renaissance as a hub of cultural life, at once laid-back and sophisticated, blends the Old World and the 21st century.

This is what Bolívar, who envisioned Bogotá as a world-class capital, would have wanted. Born in Caracas, capital of present-day Venezuela, and a European-educated scion of its upper crust—he was an unabashed Europhile—Bolívar made a gallant insurgent. His cherished refuge, shared with Manuela Sáenz, a comrade-in-arms and his mistress, was the Quinta de Bolívar, his estate in La Candelaria's upper reaches, today a museum dedicated to the Liberator. Wander the low-slung manor house, stocked with antique chandeliers and gilt-framed



READ IT
DO IT

Explore Bogotá and Colombia on a National Geographic Expedition:
nationalgeographicexpeditions.com/colombia.



Patrons dine in cozy quarters at the restaurant El Patio. Anise-flavored *aguardiente* (opposite), served with lime, is Colombia's national drink.



mirrors, or the neoclassical gardens abounding with such regional botanical curiosities as Andean blueberries, and you may understand Carla Baquero's feelings about the place.

"I'm always overwhelmed by the Quinta," she tells me. "I think of Bolívar and his Manuelita, and how happy they were here. But it didn't last." Bolívar would depart for self-imposed exile, and Manuelita eventually was exiled by the new government.

BOLÍVAR WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE much of the city he helped put on the map. The ride in from the airport had whipped me down an expressway toward Bogotá's phalanx of skyscrapers, their windows aflame with the midday sun, set against the green mass of Monserrate. As we shot beneath bridges streaked with graffiti, I felt short of breath from the 8,660-foot altitude. But the clarity of the light washing over the scene, enriching all the colors, infused me with optimism.

One morning I have a meeting with a young man who, from what I've read, is doing all that he can to change Bogotá for the better. On my way to our appointment I manage to get lost in La Candelaria's tapestry of streets, and soon am hurrying down sidewalks, sidestepping manholes, dodging roaring buses. Miguel Uribe greets me in the courtyard café of the peach-colored Hotel de la Opera, a throwback to colonial times. At 28, Uribe is the second youngest deputy on Bogotá's City Council. He also happens to be a grandson of former Colombian president Julio César Turbay Ayala. Uribe knows more than most about Colombia's grievous past. In 1990, drug lord Pablo Escobar ordered the kidnapping of his mother, television journalist Diana Turbay. Five months in captivity ended with a botched police rescue attempt and, in 1991, her death during a firefight. (Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez immortalized the tragedy in his nonfiction masterpiece, *News of a Kidnapping*.)

Uribe, who was four at the time, professes no bitterness; he prefers to focus on the encouraging changes he's seen recently.

"In the 1990s, we were prisoners of narco traffickers and guerrilla groups in our own city. Now, it's no more dangerous here than in other urban areas." He sips a soda before adding, "Bogotá has been modernizing, but La Candelaria has kept its identity, with its houses restored, security improved, excellent bars and restaurants opening, and lots of good new hotels."

He's right about hotels. I'm staying at the Abadia Colonial, a sleepy inn fashioned out of a colonial home, with an Italian restaurant in the courtyard. The Italian owner, Paolo Rocchi, proudly describes to me La Candelaria's burgeoning artistic community and the French and Italians who are moving here to enjoy it. "It is like living in the center of San Francisco—the San Francisco of South America."

La Candelaria's revival has incorporated touches of the cosmopolitan, which are welcome in a Colombia that has only recently ended its relative political isolation.

"A night out in Bogotá was once about *arepas* [flatbreads]

Clutching a puppy, a young girl (top left) pauses by a store selling hand-knit woolen wares. Bursts of color spruce up old buildings in the Candelaria neighborhood (top right), Bogotá's historical center. The cable car ride down Monserrate (bottom) rewards riders with eye-filling views of Colombia's capital city.

and rum," says Yolima Herrera, one of two Bogotanas who join me for dinner at the neighborhood restaurant El Patio. "Today, people also can order wine, gourmet cheeses, and hams."

We toast the evening with a South American Cabernet Sauvignon as good as any from France and pore over a menu of Europe-inspired dishes. "Tourism has been vital to our revival," adds my other dinner companion, Angela Garzón, who works in city government. "We were on the blacklist of nations."

HOWEVER MUCH LA CANDELARIA is changing, reminders of Colombia's turbulent past remain. As light floods down from a sun burning brighter here in the tropics than anything I'm used to, I walk, still a bit short of breath from the altitude, across Plaza de Bolívar. On this spot in 1817, Spaniards put to death Policarpa Salavarrieta, a seamstress who spied for the movement for independence from Spain. Now honored by a plaque, she is her country's revolutionary heroine; at her execution, she refused orders to kneel and turn away. Instead, she defiantly stood and faced the riflemen as they fired.

Just steps away, on pedestrian-only Carrera 7, I find an example of Bogotá's more ludic spirit. A man is playing, simultaneously, a drum on his back, a flute attached to his chin, and

I'VE ALWAYS FELT BOGOTÁ WAS IN MY BLOOD. MAYBE IT'S ASCRIBABLE TO MY MOTHER, WHO SPENT A FEW YEARS HERE AS A TEEN IN A CASA SEÑORIAL, WHERE SHE WAS NEVER HAPPIER.

a guitar hanging from his neck. He manages, with contortions, to produce a salsa tune that couples dance to, skirting concrete flower planters painted with wry sayings such as "*Si eres sabio, ríe*—If you're wise, laugh" and "*Los feos tenemos más estilo*—We ugly folks have more style." Just south of the square, at the artisanal market Pasaje Rivas, vendors greet passersby with figurines of the Virgin Mary—and the Simpsons.

Then there is Bogotá's resurgent, and spirited, café life. I'm immediately drawn to Mitho Café, a wood-paneled space warmed by a freestanding fireplace, which I nestle next to one drizzly afternoon with a *crema de whiskey* and a crusty *picada* of chorizo sausage and baby potatoes. Another afternoon I experiment with absinthe at El Gato Gris, which dubs itself "Bohemia in Bogotá." El Gato's menu of cocktails features, appropriately, a sketch of surrealist Spanish artist Salvador Dalí with his signature pencil mustache. Sitting at a small table under a wrought iron chandelier, watching a failing sun gild rococo church belfries, I sip from my chalice of absinthe, which has been sweetened with chocolate and a stick of cinnamon. My favorite drink, however, will turn out to be a Colombian standard: a shot of *aguardiente* ("fiery water") preceded by a quick chomp on a slice of lime.

My final night in Bogotá, I return to a nocturnal haunt in La Candelaria I've come to love above all. The night is chill and

Continued on page 96



Hello World

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Hello Tomorrow

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emirates.com/us

THE TRAVELER

In China, rotating pods atop Guangzhou's Canton Tower overlook one of the world's most populous cities.



50

ESSENTIAL PLACES, PEOPLE, TRENDS, AND IDEAS
THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD'S SMARTEST
CITIES INTO TRAVELERS' HOTTEST TICKETS



BY GEORGE W. STONE

We all know our world is increasingly urbanized, but what makes a city *smart*? A sense of place, for starters, says Ian MacFarlane, consultant for National Geographic Channel's Smart Cities program. "A city needs a heart and soul—typically the center, where people congregate for work and leisure. Smart cities are well-connected locally and internationally, have a sustainable lifestyle, and are places where people come first," he says. Here's our essential list of things we love in the world's most exciting cities.

EXPERT
OPINION

California Dreamers Wanted

1 "A history book from the 1930s described San Francisco in the 1840s: 'Everything was conceived on a vast scale, and there was always plenty of cash available for any scheme that might be proposed, no matter how impossible or bizarre it seemed.' Nothing has changed: The city is the global epicenter of big 'unrealistic' dreamers. Drop what you're doing and meander through our twisting streets for inspiration, for the excitement of new possibilities." —TIM FERRISS, *early-stage tech investor and author of the best-selling The 4-Hour Workweek*



Innovation is always in fashion in San Francisco, including wearable tech.

2 Pedaling Paris

Bike-share for *les enfants*? But of course! New rental stations in pedestrian zones opened in the city this year, geared toward city cyclists in training. Petits Parisiens—and visitors—ages two to eight can choose from four models equipped with helmets, including balance bikes or training wheels, to ride in parks or along the Seine. Classes also test stability and teach cycling etiquette, since good habits start young.

3 Passage to India

Travelers might spot the peacock feather motif throughout terminal 2 of Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji airport. This and other lofty designs were unveiled earlier this year at the Jaye He Museum, now India's largest public art program. Some 7,000 works pack the four-story museum. Considering that 40 million people pass through the airport each year, the exhibit rivals the Louvre in number of visitors.

JOSH EDELSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (GLASSES); PAUL LANGROCK/ZENIT/LAIF/REDUX (OPENING SPREAD)



Rome's Parco degli Acquadotti bridges ancient and modern.

EXPERT
OPINION

Rome: For Time Travelers

4 “In 2015, the nearly 2,000-year-old Colosseum and the baroque Trevi Fountain in Rome will reopen, following multimillion-dollar restorations. But the past is always present here. In the 12th-century Basilica of San Clemente, stone stairs take you back to a fourth-century church that now lies beneath ground level. From there, dark passages lead down to a first-century temple. In this space, where ancient streets run deep beneath modern Rome, the long history of a great city comes alive.” —P. D. SMITH, *author of City: A Guidebook for the Urban Age*

5 Common Threads

Paducah has us in stitches. This small Kentucky town was recently named a UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art for its efforts to sew together world-class fiber arts assets (the National Quilt Museum is located here) and to attract creatives (potters, painters, jewelry makers) to its LowerTown Arts District.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

WHAT MAKES YOUR CITY SMART? CHIME IN ONLINE USING HASHTAG #NATGEOSMARTCITY

The Wonderful City in Oz

6 “Melbourne regularly tops quality-of-life rankings worldwide. How did it achieve this enviable position? Just a few decades ago, the city’s downtown was dead, emptied by waves of suburban expansion. Then a new chief architect, Rob Adams, from South Africa, translated to Melbourne the lesson he had learned at the University of Cape Town during the 1960s. So you have the city we all know today—where density has brought an unprecedented level of urban intensity.” —CARLO RATTI, *director of the MIT Senseable City Lab*

Sidney Myer Music Bowl
lights up for a White Night
Melbourne festival concert.



7

EYE IN THE SKY | TOSS THE GRAPEFRUIT-SIZE PANONO PANORAMIC BALL CAMERA INTO THE AIR, AND ITS 36 LENSES WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY SNAP WHEN THE BALL REACHES PEAK HEIGHT; SOFTWARE THEN CREATES A 360-DEGREE, 108-MEGAPIXEL IMAGE OF, SAY, TIMES SQUARE OR ANGKOR WAT THAT YOU CAN DOWNLOAD AND SHARE.



8

Up on the Roof

URBAN FARMING IS GAINING GROUND. FAIRMONT HOTELS PLACED ROOFTOP HIVES AT PROPERTIES IN TORONTO (ABOVE), BOSTON, SEATTLE, AND OTHER CITIES WORLDWIDE. FIVE YEARS AGO, MANHATTAN'S BELL BOOK & CANDLE STARTED GROWING GREENS IN AEROPONIC ROOFTOP GARDENS; ITS SIMILARLY HIGH-MINDED SISTER RESTAURANT, BIDWELL, RECENTLY OPENED IN D.C.

9

Beyond Bier

After years of resting on its hops, Germany is embracing the microbrewery trend. Berlin brewmasters lead the charge by tweaking the *reinheitsgebot*, the Bavarian “purity law” dating to 1487. Floral Belgian-style beers and chocolaty British stouts now froth up at Berlin bars such as Heidenpeters.

10

Data Streams

Techies call Chattanooga “Gig City” for its lightning-fast Internet. But what do locals do when not digitizing? They bike and hike along the revitalized Riverwalk path, part of a \$250 million reinvention along the banks of the Tennessee.

11

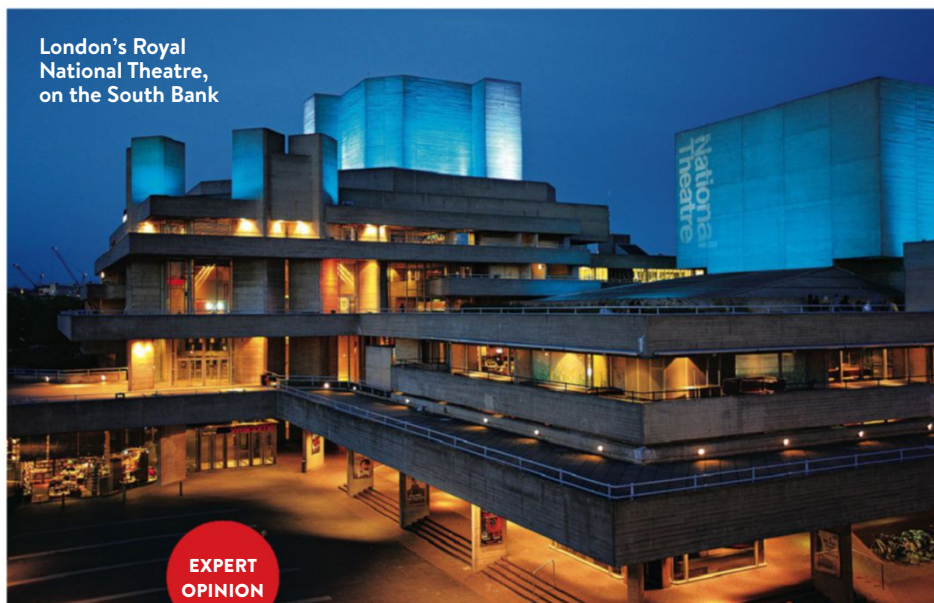
Swedish Synergy

By 2030, the in-development Stockholm Royal Seaport plans to be free of fossil fuels and a showcase for sustainable city design.

12

Into the Wild

For travelers who like their town with a bit of country, Ontario’s Parkbus connects Toronto and Ottawa to provincial and national parks. The goal: Make campgrounds and trailheads accessible to car-less urbanites.



London’s Royal National Theatre, on the South Bank

EXPERT
OPINION

When Old Buildings Go Out of Style

13 “London has always welcomed and encouraged a tremendous degree of experimentation, and my own work developed entirely because I live here. Often, the more radical a proposal, the more appropriate it is for the city. That’s why I like the brutalist post-1960s buildings on London’s South Bank. But it has fallen out of favor, and most of it is being demolished—though these are actually some of the best examples of architecture in London.” —ZAHA HADID, *Pritzker Prize-winning architect*



14

Tot Tracker

HAS YOUR KID GOTTEN LOST IN LISBON? FILIP IS A WATCHLIKE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATOR THAT TAPS INTO GPS, CELL TOWERS, AND WI-FI NETWORKS TO LOCATE YOUR WANDERING COMPANION. AN EMERGENCY BUTTON TRIGGERS A LOCATION BEACON AND ALARM, THEN DIALS FIVE CONTACT NUMBERS.

15

LOOK BOOK | WANT TO TALK TO MORE THAN A BILLION PEOPLE? CHINEASY IS AN EDUCATIONAL IMMERSION INTO CHINA’S LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. TRADITIONAL FIGURES ARE ARTFULLY EMBELLISHED TO CREATE PICTOGRAMS OF WORDS, WHICH THEN BECOME THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR PHRASES.



The bar at Gastón Acurio's La Mar in Lima, Peru

Lima: World's Most Edible Burg

16 “As a chef, I’ve always been fascinated to see not only how food can be a bridge between cultures but also its connection with history and politics. Lima shows how Peru embraces the world through culinary influences from Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and Asia—especially Japan and China. Everyone should taste Lima’s innovative food, visit markets like El Surquillo, and meet its people, like Gastón Acurio. One of the world’s great chefs, he’s also adored in Peru for turning food into an agent of social change.” —JOSÉ ANDRÉS, *chef and restaurateur*

ENRICO FANTONI/REDUX

EXPERT
OPINION

17

Inn and Out

Where’d the front desk go? At the Sound Garden Hotel in Warsaw, a kiosk spits out a key after guests select their room and swipe their credit card. Starwood is developing a system that enables smartphones to unlock doors in Silicon Valley. And room service is just a text message away at the Four Seasons in Philadelphia.

18

Fast Track

The East Coast’s congested business corridor—the 438 miles from Boston via New York to Washington, D.C.—could see the first U.S. tryout of Japan’s electromagnetically propelled high-speed railway. Tested at 310 miles an hour, aerodynamic Super-Maglev trains could dash from Baltimore to Washington in 15 minutes.

19

Locavores Unite

Traveling Spoon, EatWith, and Feastly—and destination-specific sites such as Eat With Locals Prague (www.eatwithlocals.eu)—are just some of the start-ups that connect travelers in Paris, Budapest, Bangalore, and beyond with foodies who cook and serve meals in their homes.

20

Droning On

A Detroit company is designing lightweight autonomous aircraft capable of carrying 12 pounds of goods—capacity enough for a Chicago pizza party or a Brooklyn bagel breakfast.



21

Harbin, China

POPULATION 10 MILLION

Harbin Cultural Center isn't centrally located. Instead, its hypermodern design, inspired by the area's snowy mountain landscape, attracts lovers of both traditional opera and contemporary theater to the outskirts of this northern China city.

22

Tallinn, Estonia

POPULATION 400,000

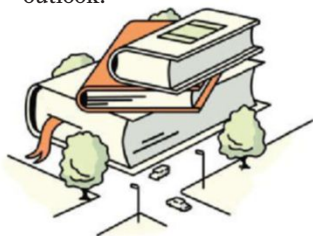
Skype was born here, and it's hardly the only innovation to come from this UNESCO World Heritage city. Public bus and tram transit is free, bikes abound, and the old Hanseatic trading center brims with business, turning a medieval city into a digital-age exemplar.

23

Halifax, Nova Scotia

POPULATION 375,000

One coastal Canadian city is betting on books. A \$57.6 million central library will act as hub to 14 branches—an investment in words and indoorsy charms in a town with a famously outdoorsy outlook.



21-32

A Dozen Smart Cities To Visit Right Now

24

Lexington, Kentucky

POPULATION 305,000

When completed, the ambitious serpentine urban park Town Branch Commons will channel a bluegrass vibe with concerts and social spaces, while the city's downtown will soon see an angular new sports arena anchor a reinvented arts district.

25

Groningen, Netherlands

POPULATION 192,000

Pedal-friendly policies from the late 1970s have turned this university city into one of the world's most bike-obsessed places. Half of all trips here are done by bike, making locals among the world's busiest cyclists. Travelers also find biking here a breeze.

26

Detroit, Michigan

POPULATION 689,000

A start-up culture powers Motown's struggle to rise from the ashes of economic disaster. Artists fill any open spaces with color. The creative class gathers in Corktown, and the tech set dines near downtown's M@dison office building.

DAVID NUNUK/ALL CANADA PHOTOS/CORBIS



Vancouver's thousand-acre playground, Stanley Park includes lakes and beaches.

27 Vancouver, British Columbia

POPULATION 580,000

This Pacific Northwest gateway follows an ambitious plan to become the planet's greenest city by 2020. Goals include switching to renewable energy, reducing waste, and increasing green space so that anyone will be within a five-minute walk of a park.

28 Buenos Aires, Argentina

POPULATION 3 MILLION

Public Wi-Fi, bike-share programs, and pedestrian- and bike-friendly urban restructuring efforts are under way—and Porteños love it. In this literary city, a million people visit the ornate El Ateneo Grand Splendid bookstore each year.

29 Bogotá, Colombia

POPULATION 6.8 MILLION

Latin American art is ascendant—and it's getting a lot of play in Colombia's cleaned-up and calmed-down capital (see page 50), where galleries, exhibitions, and art schools show off their goods, especially in October during the annual ArtBO festival.

30 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

POPULATION 600,000

This once workaday city has transformed 7.5 miles of dry riverbed into an urban park (Oklahoma River Trails) and Olympic-caliber rowing center. Bricktown has emerged as an entertainment district. And the list of capital improvements keeps growing; new features include streetcars and bike lanes.



31 Santander, Spain

POPULATION 180,000

This Cantabrian port city takes tech seriously; 10,000 scattered sensors monitor lights, temperature, traffic, water usage, pollutant levels, and more to produce a nonstop data flow that locals and tourists access by smartphone to track buses and taxis, flag down cops, or report problems.

32 Haifa, Israel

POPULATION 267,000

Like many old ports, Haifa is a seaside city with limited public access to its coast. A new waterfront plan aims to change all that by building a wide promenade and repurposing existing port warehouses to create a scenic waterside public space that bridges the city's historic core with its shipping heritage.

33

Cities by the Numbers

The sheer scale and complexity of cities make them a feast for data crunchers. Below, some illuminating stats for the urban traveler:



+180%

Increase in tourism to the Vatican in 2013, largely attributed to Pope Francis

70

Percent of world's population urbanized by 2050, compared with 3 percent 100 years ago.

-11%

Drop in foreign tourism to Beijing in 2013. Causes include air pollution and political tension.

600

Cities with a population of more than one million by 2025. In 1800, only Beijing had more than a million people.



5 BEST BUZZES

How the cost of the daily grind stacks up in the world's hip sipping spots

CITY	PLACE	NEIGHBORHOOD	DRINK	COST (U.S.D.)
Addis Ababa	To.Mo.Ca.	Wavel Street	Espresso	\$0.50
Amsterdam	Espresso Fabriek	Westerpark	Drip brew	\$3
New York	Stumptown	Chelsea	Macchiato	\$2.80
Singapore	Nylon	Everton Park	Flat white	\$3
Sydney	Coffee Alchemy	Marrickville	Cold drip	\$4

MOST POPULOUS MEGACITIES

Tokyo	34.8 million
Guangzhou	31.7 million
Shanghai	28.9 million
Jakarta	26.4 million
Seoul	25.8 million

U.S. CITIES WITH THE CLEANEST AIR*

1. Cheyenne, Wyoming
2. St. George, Utah
3. Santa Fe, New Mexico
4. Prescott, Arizona

*Particle pollution



CITIES WITH THE BEST BIKE-SHARE SYSTEMS

1. Barcelona, Spain
2. Lyon, France
3. Mexico City, Mexico

U.S. CITIES WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF BIKE COMMUTERS

1. Portland, Oregon
2. Minneapolis, Minnesota
3. Washington, D.C.
4. Seattle, Washington
5. San Francisco, California

MOST INSTAGRAMMED CITY PLACES OF 2013

1. Siam Paragon shopping mall in Bangkok, Thailand
2. Times Square, New York City
3. Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif.

SOURCES: VATICAN; BEIJING TOURISM; UNITED NATIONS POPULATION DIVISION; UNITED NATIONS, WORLD URBANIZATION PROSPECTS: THE 2007 REVISION; THOMAS BRINKHOFF: THE PRINCIPAL AGGLOMERATIONS OF THE WORLD, 2013-10-01; AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION; INSTITUTE FOR TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY; LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS; INSTAGRAM

HANS MADE/JA/IF/REDUX (VATICAN); ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTOPH HITZ



Amsterdam's wintry Museumplein square

EXPERT
OPINION

Arty Amsterdam

34 “Until recently, cities were always ready to invest major money in sports stadiums, but investing in art may be the smarter move. The recent comeback kid, among European cities, is Amsterdam, which renovated and reopened all three of its major cultural institutions—Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh Museum, and the Stedelijk—in the past couple of years. The galleries frame a refreshed square, the Museumplein, that now hosts regular music performances. When the cold sweeps in, the square becomes one elegant little skating rink.” —RAPHAEL KADUSHIN, *Traveler contributing editor*

PETER DE JONG/AP IMAGES (ICE SKATERS), BROWN, SIMON/THE FOOD PASSIONATES/CORBIS (PASTA)

35 Pasta Park

Global grocer Eataly, with 27 outposts, has fed a worldwide passion for Italian food. When the \$55 million Fico Eataly World opens in Bologna, Italy, in 2015, it will feature restaurants, food shops, and plots of land for agricultural studies.



36 Desert Rose

Famous for its frenzied consumption, Dubai plans to be the world's most sustainable city by 2020. Green building technology and energy-efficient urban lighting will drive the savings. The eco-initiative will be partly funded through a tax added to hotel room tabs.

37 What's Up, Docs?

Medical tourism is big business. Travelers are following their noses to Rio for low-price rhinoplasty, and all eyes are on Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok for affordable cataract surgery.

Where Smart Gets Its Start

38 “Cities have long been crucibles of ideas. They can bring together a critical mass of diverse minds and offer refuge to mavericks. The age of reason and the Enlightenment were also an age of urbanization. London, Paris, and Amsterdam became intellectual bazaars. Classical Athens, Renaissance Venice, and revolutionary Boston and Philadelphia were places where new democracies gestated, and even today urbanization and democracy tend to go together.” —STEVEN PINKER, *author of The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*

39

Green Acres

New York’s celebrated High Line keeps growing. A \$76 million extension to the elevated park is expected to debut this year. And at the Dallas Arboretum, the new Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden, an eight-acre, \$62 million experiential ecosystem, hosts some 150 kid-friendly exhibits.

FRANK HEUER/LAIF/REDUX



40

Samba Simpatico

Fresh from the World Cup and poised to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, Rio de Janeiro will open in 2015 the Museum of Tomorrow, a forward-thinking science and tech hot spot designed by Santiago Calatrava. Open now: the Cidade das Artes, a modernist arts hall dedicated to music and film.



The Italian hill town of San Gimignano

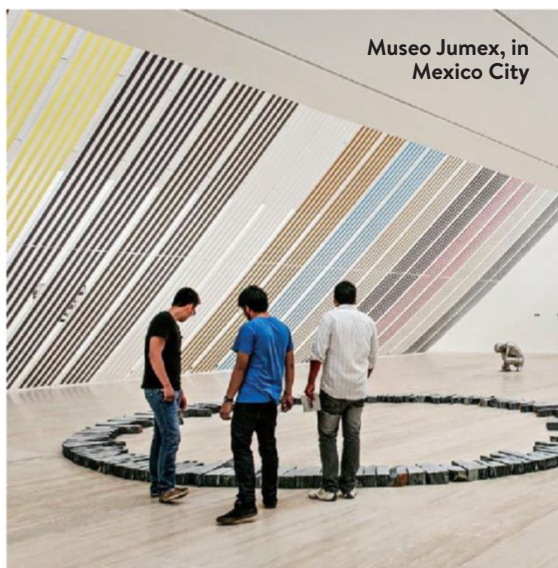
EXPERT
OPINION

Small Is Beautiful

41 “Grand cities are immersive, but along with that comes the feeling of anxiety or guilt—of not seeing everything there is to see. Small cities are wondrous places where you can submerge yourself and feel you’ve seen almost everything. In many Italian cities, such as San Gimignano, Siena, or Vicenza, you can get lost and feel nothing but happiness.” —RICHARD SAUL WURMAN, *information architect, author, and founder of the TED conferences*



39
New Yorkers
maintain their
High Line fidelity.



Museo Jumex, in Mexico City

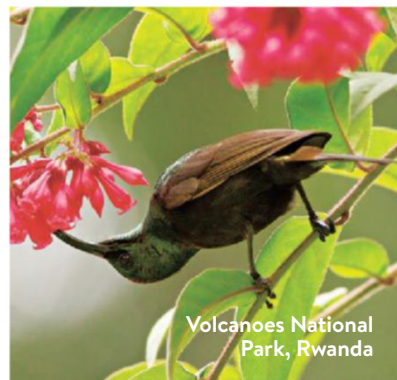
42

Mexican Mix

ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS CITIES NOW ADDS A SMALL BUT WEIGHTY VENUE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART. MUSEO JUMEX, A 40,000-SQUARE-FOOT SPACE IN MEXICO CITY'S NUEVO POLANCO DISTRICT, FURTHER ASSERTS THE CAPITAL'S STANDING AS THE PLACE WHERE NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICAN AESTHETICS COLLIDE.

The City to Watch in Africa

43 “Rwanda’s complete ban on plastic bags has helped make its capital, Kigali, a remarkably clean-looking city with beautifully groomed gardens. The Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre educates locals and tourists on the genocide in Rwanda 20 years ago. Close access to conservation-minded places with community-based initiatives—from volcanoes to wildlife (mountain gorillas and more)—makes this city an educational gem.” —**PEGI VAIL**, *anthropologist, director/producer of the tourism documentary Gringo Trails*



Volcanoes National
Park, Rwanda

JOE McDONALD/CORBIS (BIRD), LI MINGFANG/XINHUA PRESS/
CORBIS (HEADSTANDS)

An acrobatics event
in Taipei’s Huashan
Creative Park



44 Holodeck Holidays

Powered by 3-D image capturing software, “holodeck” will soon project realistic virtual environments ripe for exploring. The device will be pricey, but will bring the dream of ogling art in the Prado or dancing in Djibouti to your living room. Other projects in the works aim for e-escapes via smartphone.

45 Heart in Seoul

This century’s definitive architect may be Zaha Hadid (see page 66), whose Aquatics Centre was the centerpiece of the 2012 London Olympics. Her newly opened Dongdaemun Design Plaza has freshened up Seoul’s chic shopping district, positioning South Korea as Asia’s most stylish hub.

46 Electric Slide

Are you a power walker? Commuters near Calais, France, are. A sidewalk section at the St.-Omer train station has been outfitted with 14 energy-harvesting tiles that capture and convert enough pep from pedestrian traffic to light up seating areas and power USB recharging stations.

47 Ban in Colorado

Celebrated for his cardboard cathedral in New Zealand, which helped Christchurch rise above a devastating earthquake, Japanese architect Shigeru Ban has designed his first U.S. museum. The Aspen Art Museum boasts the only unobstructed public rooftop view of Aspen Mountain.

EXPERT OPINION

End of Road Rage

48 “As autonomous vehicles become more prevalent and increasingly replace traditional automobiles, the urban landscape and travel experience will change in profound ways. Imagine a world in which driverless car software makes traffic obsolete and parking garages unnecessary, and sends taxi drivers the way of the Pullman porter. Autonomous cars are a less chaotic urban experience, which—with companies like Google and Uber perfecting the software—we’ll begin to see take shape within the next decade.” —PATRICK DOWD, *founder and CEO, the Millennial Trains Project*

Taipei Personality

SOME CALL TAIWAN’S CAPITAL “HUMBLE HIP” FOR ITS SUNNY DISPOSITION AND CREATIVE SPARK. BOTH TRAITS SHINE AT HUASHAN CREATIVE PARK, A ONCE DERELICT 1914 FACTORY RECAST AS AN ARTS CENTER. THE LITTLE ISLAND OFF CHINA’S COAST IS NOT JUST HOME TO THE WORLD’S MOST FAMOUS COLLECTION OF ANCIENT CHINESE ART; NOW IT’S A MODERN ARTS PLAYER, TOO.



São Paulo's Vila Madalena

50 Neighborhoods on the Rise

VILA MADALENA SÃO PAULO'S STYLISH, BIKE-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD (ABOVE) MERGES THE IMAGINATIVE CHARGE OF PORTLAND, OREGON, WITH THE RELAXED CHEER OF BRAZIL.

TAI PING SHAN HONG KONG'S LEAFY CONTRAST TO THE CACOPHONY OF THE BUSINESS DISTRICT IS A FASHIONABLE BASTION OF BOUTIQUES AND GALLERIES.

MOURARIA LISBON'S GRITTY HOOD HAS A HISTORY THAT STRETCHES BACK 900 YEARS TO PORTUGAL'S MEDIEVAL TIMES.

KING ALBERT SQUARE FANS OF TEL AVIV'S BAUHAUS ARCHITECTURE LINGER HERE FOR NEW DESIGN-MINDED HOTELS AND INDIE ISRAELI SHOPS.



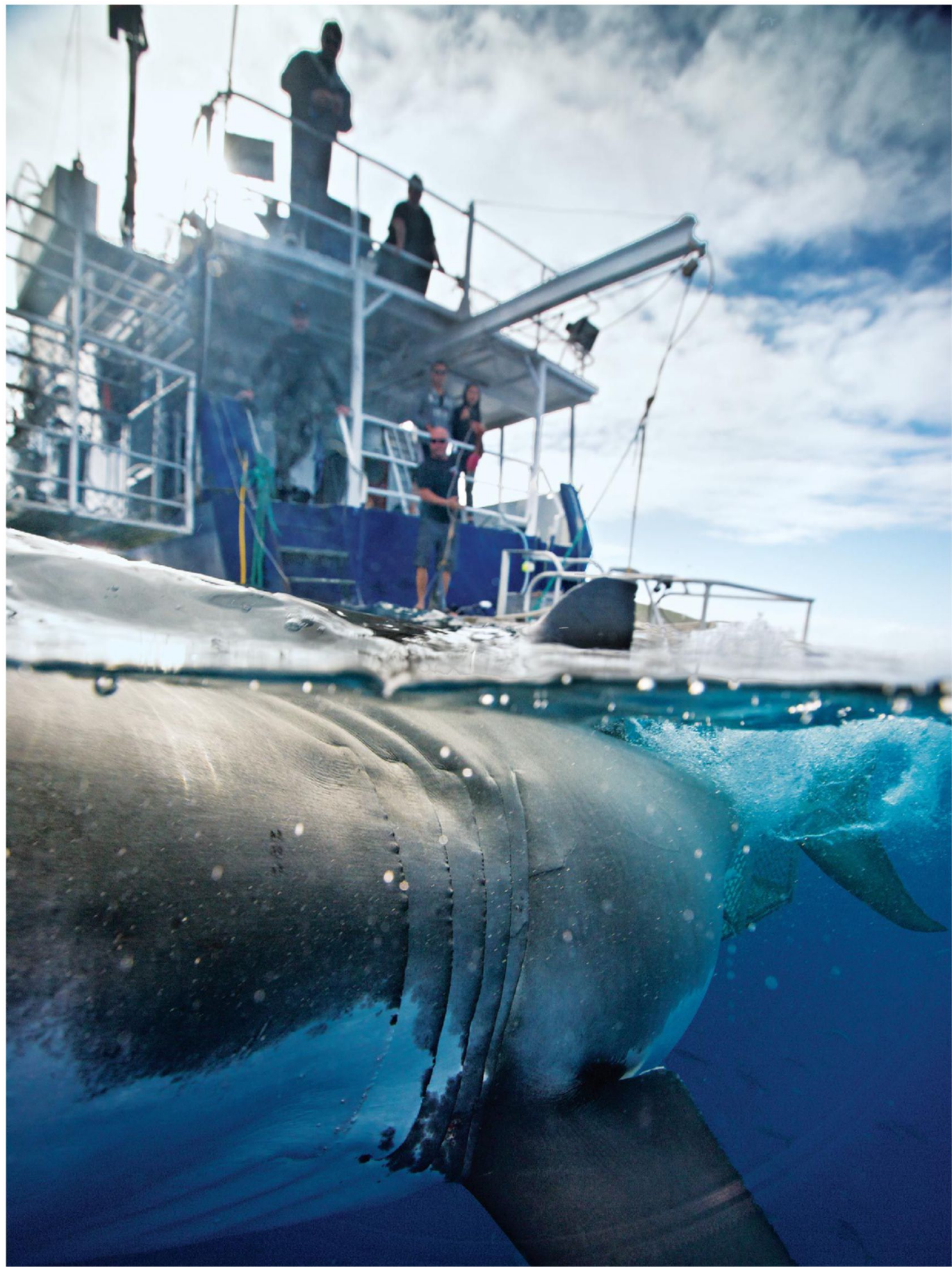
DOWN UNDER

FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE GREAT WHITES OFF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S NEPTUNE ISLANDS

BY CARRIE MILLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL MELFORD





“SHARK ON!”

of the southern Indian Ocean. I am desperate for any sighting of the creature that has obsessed me since childhood and lured me to the remote and rugged Neptune Islands, 20 miles off the coast of South Australia: the great white shark. ¶ “Jumbo’s back!” yells Tom Pagano, an American expat living in Melbourne and one of eight passengers on a four-day journey with Rodney Fox Shark Expeditions. When I reach the upper deck, Pagano is grinning. On this ship, the shout of “Shark!” ignites thrill, not panic. ¶ Jumbo, a female more than 17 feet in length and named for the number on her tracking tag, 747, is circling our ship. From where I stand on the upper deck she looks like a bronze airplane, her pectoral fins the wings. Pagano leans over the railing, cup of tea in hand. ¶ “We’re gonna need a bigger boat.”

IT’S THE LINE ALL ON board have been waiting to say, from the 1975 movie everyone knows: *Jaws*. And this ship has a special connection to *Jaws*. The leader of our expedition, Andrew Fox, had told us how his father, Rodney, worked as a shark adviser on the film’s second unit. Andrew himself saw his first shark at age seven.

“The movie frightened a lot of people out of the water,” Fox told our group when we gathered the first night. “But it also created a large number of people who wanted to see sharks up close. They’re like the last dragons.”

These dragons have captivated me since I can remember. The great white was my favorite animal when I was growing up in landlocked Minnesota. *Carcharodon carcharias*, “the ragged-tooth one,” is the world’s largest predatory fish and a mystery millions of years old. At one time, great whites swam through my dreams every night. To me, sharks are everything that is wild, untamed, and unpredictable about the world.

When I was 12, my father bought me a small shark tooth sharp enough to prick a finger, and put it on a necklace. “If you wear this in the ocean,” he’d told me, “the sharks will recognize you as one of their own and won’t harm you.”

Now, as I sit on the back platform of the *Princess II*, my legs dangling into the open hatch of the surface cage while dive master Chris Taylor helps me with my weight belt, I think about the tooth, which I’m wearing around my neck under my wet suit. I’m impatient to get in the cage, but I also feel the edginess that keeps all of us—especially the crew—ultra-alert when the sharks are around.

Jumbo’s large dorsal fin slices through the water a few feet from the cage as the back of the ship heaves in the swells.

“Don’t look at the cage,” Taylor advises me, tightening the belt’s straps. “Keep your eyes on the horizon; it will help you keep your balance.”

He hands me one of four regulators that connect to a central air hose, and I descend the short ladder to the bottom of the cage. My breath quickens as I feel the cold water press against my thick wet suit. I’m not a diver; it takes me a moment to acclimatize to breathing through a regulator.

Pivoting in the cage seven feet underwater, I scan the blue for any flash of white, any movement, but Jumbo is gone. The

I drop my forkful of eggs and bolt out of the lounge, pinballing off the carved wooden pillars of the *Princess II* as the boat rolls gently in the open swells

only sound is my breathing. Then the back of my neck begins to prickle. I slowly turn.

Jumbo’s pointed nose is six inches from my stomach, as close to the lower viewing window of the cage as she can get. I could touch her if I dared. She seems to consider squeezing her whalelike girth through the small window opening before dropping one of her fins and banking away. I shoot backward to the center of the cage, shaking with the shock of having a 1.5-ton shark successfully sneak up on me.

Jumbo doubles back and glides past the cage again, within arm’s length of that lower window. Her eye is not the dead matte black from the movies but brown, with a lively blue ring around the outside. She turns and passes me again, rolling onto her side to get a better look. I’m the only one in the cage, the sole focus of her attention. I drop to my knees, lean forward, and grip the metal bars. Our eyes meet, and I feel a thrill of awe and terror.

“Sharks love sneaking up on things,” Fox tells me minutes later, as he helps me out of my wet suit. “They’re ambushers. It’s safest and most efficient for them. If they know you’ve seen them, they behave differently, becoming much more wary. What’s that around your neck?”

Fox has spotted my shark tooth. Suddenly, I feel self-conscious; wearing it in front of someone whose father was famously torn open by a great white shark seems insensitive. It took 462 stitches to put Rodney Fox back together. A shark tooth is still embedded in his right wrist.

The shark bite changed the course of Rodney Fox’s life. To observe the creature that “got him,” Fox designed the world’s first shark cage so he could watch sharks in their environment in an unprovoked and, he hoped, natural state—the beginning of his evolution from shark victim to shark champion.

“This tooth of yours may be good luck,” Andrew Fox says. “You got the attention of a really special shark.”

“How many have you seen in one day?” I ask.

“Nineteen great whites in 15 minutes. Ironically, we were testing a new shark repellent device,” Fox grins.

Rodney Fox Shark Expeditions is the only outfitter in the world to offer ocean-floor cage diving, in which a shark cage is lowered to a depth of 65 feet.

“Sharks are more alert up top in case something’s up,” Fox

A multiday expedition on the *Princess II* immerses guests in the world of great white sharks. Opening spread: Sharks use their teeth, which have up to 15 degrees of flexibility, like exploring fingers.

explains. “On the bottom, they’re more relaxed and curious.”

As one of two non-dive-certified passengers on the expedition, I won’t get to try the ocean-floor cage, but I don’t miss a chance to be at ship’s edge when the cage is raised, seawater hissing out of the gaps in the bars. Invariably, the divers spit out their regulators as soon as the cage breaks the surface, talking over one another in their excitement. “Did you see that male shark just circling and circling?” Oliver Thomson, a passenger from Sydney, exclaims. “Two giant squid could have been mating behind me and I wouldn’t have noticed—or cared.”

EVERY ONE OF US on the boat feels a need to talk about sharks, to put this experience into words. Evenings, when we gather after the diving is done, become my favorite time on the ship.

I move Fox’s camera gear off one of the benches that line the lounge to sit next to him and Ardi Tandiono, a return passenger and Singapore local. They’re examining the day’s photographs.

“Do you know this shark?” Tandiono asks Fox.

“It’s Maulder,” Fox answers. “I haven’t spotted him in a few years. I thought he may have got himself on the wrong side of the tuna industry, so I’m really happy to see him. Look,” he says, turning the laptop screen toward me. “See Maulder’s flattened dorsal fin and the hump behind? Each shark has its own markings and character. Spend enough time around them, and sharks are as easy to recognize as old friends.”



PHOTOS OF GREAT WHITES STRUNG UP BY THEIR TAILS OFFER SOBERING EVIDENCE OF OUR MUTUAL FRAGILITY.

Shark research is a critical part of these multiday dive trips to the Neptune Islands. The Rodney Fox Shark team has identified and documented more than 600 great whites in the area over the past 14 years. Most expedition passengers contribute to the work, photographing sharks and gathering information during their dives.

The research isn’t without controversy. In order to draw the sharks close to the ship for tagging and identification, bait and berley (ground-up fish) are used. The berley attracts the sharks in the immediate vicinity to the boat, while the bait keeps them around the cage.

Globally, some critics say that berleying accustoms sharks to boats, teasing the sharks with bait too close to the cage and putting them at risk of damaging themselves so tourists can get those iconic wide-jawed photographs. Scientific research on this issue has been inconclusive. In Australia, shark cage diving is highly regulated: Only two operators (including Fox) are allowed to berley, and only in specific offshore areas.

ON THE
IPAD

See what it’s like to get close to a great white shark off the Neptune Islands in a video by photographer Michael Melford.

NOT EVERYONE SHARES Fox’s affection for sharks, and many of us nurture an innate dread, carved into our DNA, of being defenseless in the ocean, vulnerable to these unseen predators. Few of us grasp sharks’ critically important role as apex predators in the marine environment. The truth is, sharks have more to fear from us than we do from them. We don’t know how many swim the oceans, but scientists are sure that even a slight shift in that delicate ecosystem will have calamitous results for marine life and the industries dependent on it.

Sharks remain a particularly touchy subject in Port Lincoln, the departure point for Rodney Fox Shark Expeditions. Port Lincoln has more millionaires per capita than any other Australian city, largely due to the \$290 million that the southern bluefin tuna industry brings in annually. Many residents here know at least one person who has been killed by a shark.

“Don’t get in the cage, girl” warned the cab driver who picked me up at the airport, a rough-hewn man with matted blond hair and a Bloody Mary in a coffee cup. “Great whites are pure evil. If they’re coming for you, there’s nothing you can do about it.”

“We get a lot of shark tales here,” says Tony Ford, the head chef at Boston Bay winery, just north of Port Lincoln. He is pouring me a Sauvignon Blanc (cheekily named “Great White”) as a David Bowie song plays in the background. “People come in from the cages absolutely buzzing.”

The winery, which was established by Ford’s parents, is a place of light, with a glassed-in tasting room that overlooks rows of grape trellises marching down a hill almost to sea’s edge. It provides a stark contrast to the old pubs in town, with their darkened interiors and absence of sea views.

“Years ago we had some of the wildest bars in Australia and some of the fittest people in the world drinking in them. The men went out to sea for days, weeks. They worked hard, came home,

and played even harder,” says John Plevin, a volunteer who is guiding me through the rabbit warren of rooms at the Axel Stenross Maritime Museum. Artifacts and photographs from the windjammer days of a hundred years ago fill the exhibit on my left. Plevin knows every vessel’s history—how it sailed, its catch quota, the men that worked it.

“A lot of fishermen came here. I arrived when I was 17; I’m 79 now, so I’m almost a local.” He smiles, then turns serious. “Some fishermen made good, and some went broke. But you want to know about the sharks.”

He points to a room down the stairs, past a Brobdingnagian anchor that seems to prop up the walls. “We do have a bit of a sharky history here. That’s the room you want.”

I turn the corner into a narrow space crowded with dented cages and wallpapered with newspaper clippings of attacks (including Rodney’s) and prize catches. I stand there for a long time. What I see—black-and-white photographs of great whites strung up by their tails on the docks—offers sobering evidence of our mutual fragility. The dead sharks look rubberized, fake, their power drained.

My own fragility is on my mind during an afternoon cruise in the tender boat, along the shore of South Neptune Island.



Author Carrie Miller meets Jumbo. "Sharks are such extraordinary predators," she says. "Occasionally they sneak bait out from under your nose."

“I OWE EVERYTHING TO THE SHARK THAT BIT ME,” RODNEY FOX HAD TOLD ME. “SHARKS ARE OUR MONSTERS—OURS TO PROTECT AND OURS TO LOVE.”



Wild Eyre Peninsula is a gateway to the Neptune Islands.

A low hill of rock and scrub, the island offers the only protection from the ten-foot swells of open ocean.

The Neptunes are home to one of Australia's largest populations of New Zealand fur seals—a favored food of great whites. So it's no surprise that a rotating population of sharks resides in these waters. Our task this afternoon is to check on the population of sea lions and seals: On every trip Fox likes to estimate numbers and evaluate the general well-being of the colony.

“A healthy seal population means a healthy shark population,” he says.

Thirty minutes earlier I was in the water in the surface cage, with Maulder circling me aggressively. Rather than feeling drawn to this shark, I instinctively pulled away from it. Above me, Fox was lowering the tender boat into the ocean for our visit to the seal colony. Suddenly, Maulder disappeared, his perfectly adapted coloring allowing him to vanish in eight feet of clear water. My eyes strained to find his form in the blue. Then, abruptly, I spotted him—rising at a steep angle directly under the tender boat. He bit at the propeller, bumping the vessel's underside.

Now I'm out of the surface cage and in the boat, cruising an area littered with shipwrecks, fully aware of what swims beneath. Rather than looking for seals, I'm scanning the water for triangular dorsal fins. It is the only time during the expedition that I feel nervous.

HOW TO BOOK

Reservations are necessary for Rodney Fox's multiday shark expeditions. Adventure Bay Charters and Calypso Star Charters offer one-day cage diving excursions out of Port Lincoln (surface cage only). You don't need a dive certificate to view sharks from the surface cage.

ON OUR LAST EVENING, I join others for a round of Shark Dice, a baffling game with rules we passengers suspect the crew make up as they go. I can see the ship's stern, illuminated by a halo of floodlights, and, beyond, the tarnished silver of the evening sea. Sharks are out there. Does our carousing draw them closer?

Life would be pale indeed without our dragons. Rodney Fox understands this better than anyone.

“I owe everything to the shark that bit me,” he'd said when we met in Adelaide, where he lives. “Sharks are our monsters—ours to protect and ours to love.”

That night I dream of a shark, a lone shape, suspended in the blue, swimming away from me. I wake feeling bereft, knowing the next day will be my last among the powerful creatures. Then something Rodney said returns to me.

“The mornings and nights out here, you realize you're alone in a wilderness, on the edge of a huge ocean, and you've been allowed a glimpse of something otherworldly.”

I've had that glimpse, and will always carry it with me. My hand strays to the talisman tooth hanging around my neck and, within minutes, a peaceful sleep overtakes me.

CARRIE MILLER is a New Zealand-based writer and former *Traveler* staff member. Frequent National Geographic contributor **MICHAEL MELFORD** photographed “Jamaica, Gently” in *Traveler's* October 2008 issue.

ADVERTISEMENT

ESCAPE TO KAUA'I

From lush valleys that look like something out of a movie to more than 50 miles of sparkling white-sand beaches, Kaua'i's captivating landscapes make it hard to keep an itinerary. Read these outdoor activity highlights to give you a head start.

WITNESS A LEGENDARY COAST

The best view of the 3,000-foot cliffs of the Nāpali Coast is from the water. Hop in a catamaran or a high-powered raft, and if the conditions are right, the captain may stop for snorkeling.

SEE THE VIEW, FROM THE SKY

For a bird's-eye view that reveals why Hollywood can't get enough of Kaua'i's paradisiacal treasures (think *Blue Hawaii*, *Jurassic Park*, and *The Descendants*), take a helicopter ride over the island's unspoiled landscapes.

TAKE A ROAD TRIP

A road trip should always be on the vacation to-do list, especially when the destination is 3,567-foot-deep Waimea Canyon. Dubbed "the Grand Canyon of the Pacific," this geologic wonder boasts colorful eroded cliffs in a natural palette of green, orange, red, and brown.

GOLF LIKE THE PROS

Golfers: If the names Jack Nicklaus and Robert Trent Jones, Jr., ring a bell, then you should know that both PGA legends designed signature courses right here on Kaua'i.

EXPLORE WATERWAYS

Water lovers should consider kayaking along the Wailua River, one of Hawai'i's only navigable rivers. Want more? Go for a two-mile tube ride down a rainwater irrigation ditch—which, in certain sections, is pitch-black.

TRY WAVE-RIDING

Kaua'i is blessed with epic surf spots on every shore. If you're eager to paddle out, sign up for a lesson with a pro—and revel in your victory when you first stand up.

GO OFF-ROADING OR ZIP-LINING

Adrenaline junkies in need of a white-knuckle fix should consider zip-lining over a rain forest. If heights are an issue, go off-road exploring through lush jungles in an ATV.

ACT LIKE A PANIOLLO, OR HAWAIIAN COWBOY

For a relaxing activity, explore Kaua'i's incredible landscapes on horseback. Ride through a sugarcane field, discover a working cattle ranch, or witness a cascading waterfall.

LEARN TO HULA

At an island luau, you can try poi (pounded taro root) and a coconut pudding called *haupia*—both are staples of the Hawaiian diet. If you're feeling brave, dancers can take you on stage to teach you how to hula.

LIFE DOES COME WITH A RESET BUTTON.



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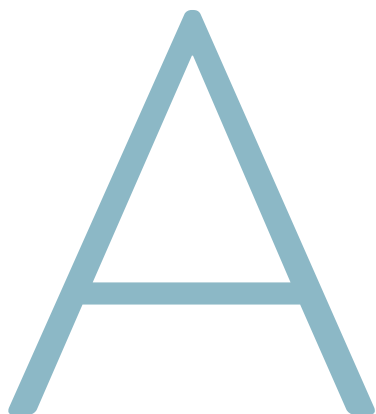
THE WEIRDEST COUNTRY IN AMERICA

*Homegrown, unique, and
thoroughly wonderful,
Louisiana has a character
all its own*



BY ANDREW NELSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRIS DAVIDSON



sign showing two crossed baguettes topped by a

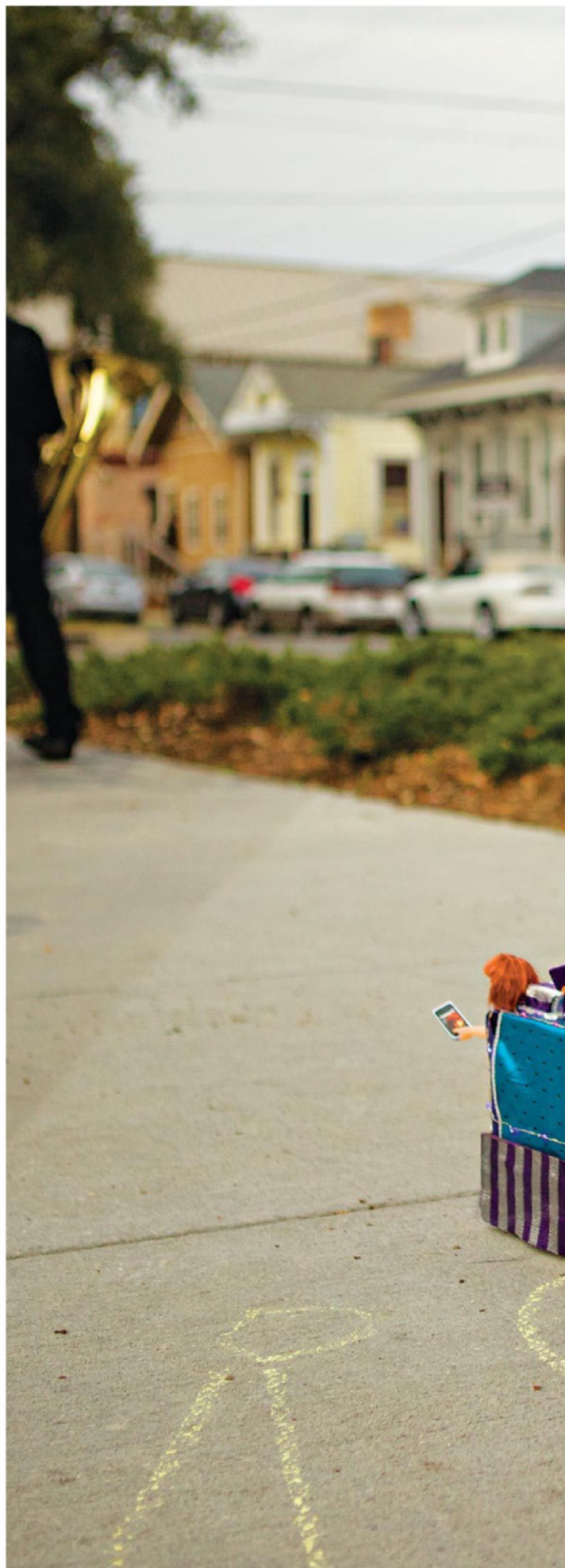
skull welcomes me to Killer Poboys, a New Orleans hole-in-the-wall known for its renegade version of Louisiana's state sandwich, the po' boy. The eatery is crammed into a back room of the Erin Rose, a pub sitting just a stumble up from the 24/7 party known as Bourbon Street. Few of Bourbon's revelers will find it; fewer still will know to squeeze past Erin Rose's regulars to the tiny kitchen area, where crusty French loaves bulging with Gulf shrimp seasoned with coriander or sliced pork belly flavored with rum are being assembled by the New Orleans-born team of Cam Boudreaux and April Bellow.

Killer Poboys could be a metaphor for Louisiana, I think as I place my order. It's an outlier in a place that has slowly standardized itself. Its front room—the boozy, convivial Erin Rose—could be in any bar. But behind it, like a furtive pirate's hideout, sits a little piece of real Louisiana, homegrown, eccentric, and bursting with the flavors of the land.

I'm in Killer Poboys to meet with Charles Chamberlain, a Ph.D. in American history and local History Man. Ten years a historian at the Louisiana State Museum before setting up his own company, Historia, to provide outsiders insights into the Pelican State, Chamberlain knows Louisiana. His clients have included academics, producers of the supernatural FX series *American Horror Story*, and, now, me. Chamberlain, I figure, is just the guy to explain why Louisiana is so different, even a little cray cray—and I don't mean the fish.

"Louisiana couldn't be anything but," he declares as we share a bag of Zapps Voodoo Potato Chips, a favorite Louisiana foodstuff. By the time President Thomas Jefferson bought the land from Napoleon in that 1803 geopolitical fire sale, he explains, this French colony was well populated with French and Spanish immigrants, refugees from Haiti, and Congolese slaves, all of whom had seeded the land with their cultures, foods, and traditions.

"If you're looking for different," he tells me, laying out an itinerary, "start here in New Orleans. You can see how we turn our quirkiness into art by visiting one of the recently formed New Orleans krewes that parade at the start of Carnival's





A shoe-box float crafted by the Krewe of 'tit Rêx awaits its Mardi Gras parade. Opening pages: Houseboats (left) are common in the Atchafalaya Basin, home turf to Creole Cowboys bandmates (right) Bernard Johnson and Jeffery Broussard.

two-week celebration. Tourists wait for Mardi Gras, which is at the end; almost no one comes for the beginning, but that's when you see something really crazy. Then follow the French settlements up to the Cane River. That's where Creoles of color built their own world. On your way back to New Orleans, explore the Atchafalaya, America's biggest swamp, by getting out on the water with the local Cajuns. You'll be glad you did."

As we emerge from Killer Poboys, blinking, into the French Quarter's afternoon light, Chamberlain adds, "Louisiana is another country. But you better see it soon; who knows how long it's going to last."

The reality is that Creoles and Cajuns, cowboys and costumers, shrimpers and planters—really, all who make life and art out of this watery land—are threatened as their world is digitized, outsourced...and submerged. Literally. Low-lying Louisiana loses a football field an hour to, among other things, rising seas.

NEW ORLEANS

LIVING ON—AND LOVING—THE OUTER EDGE

A BREEZE RATTLES THE PALM FRONDS and nags at the curlicued brackets that grace traditional Creole cottages in Bayou St. John, a New Orleans neighborhood ignored by most travelers. Little do they know that here lies a secret world inhabited by south Louisiana's Mardi Gras krewes, the private organizations responsible for the colorful Carnival parades.

Inside a house on St. Philip Street, two dining-room tables have been pushed together and piled with glue guns, glitter, and lunacy. Eight middle-aged men and women work as intently as a Guangdong factory line cutting, assembling, and pasting little things such as miniature smartphones, candy sticks, and tiny comic books (which Ziggy, a black cat, is attempting to eat).

"What can I say, he likes my work," artist Caesar Meadows, who wrote and illustrated the micro-comics, remarks.

Meadows and his wife, Jeannie Detweiler, are my hosts at this party, gathered to make the keepsakes, or "throws," that krewes toss out along their parade routes during the pre-Lenten season. In any other city in any other state, these librarians, teachers, and bartenders would be talking property values. Here, they form the Krewe of 'tit (for Petit) Røx, which distinguishes itself from New Orleans' hallowed Krewe of Rex with the upside-down ə, or schwa, to avoid confusion.

Not that that would happen. Even in the demimonde of Louisiana's Carnival, the 'tit Røx krewe is considered a little out there. Each year its members create an entire Mardi Gras parade—in miniature. Floats barely reach the length of shoe boxes; thumbnail-size throws challenge even the adroit. Maybe it's the small scale of its work, but the 'tit Røx krewe remains largely unknown outside New Orleans. It, along with the *Star Wars*-themed Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus and the bawdy Krewe du Vieux, generally parades two to three weeks ahead of Fat Tuesday, well before the world focuses in on Mardi Gras. Its route takes it through the Faubourg Marigny, a once forlorn neighborhood downriver that has blossomed recently into a Brooklyn with bougainvillea, attracting artists and the avant-garde.

"Toss in the palm trees, the day drinking, the gays, the girls,

and the sense of eccentricity here, and you have one of the most deliriously creative communities in the U.S.," says Kevin Farrell, who, with his partner, Nick Vivion, opened Booty's Street Food, an eatery now considered a staging ground for a new culinary sensibility in a state where gumbo still rules.

I glance out the window and spot a woman in silver boots and a sparkly red tutu skittering into a secondhand store across the street. She illustrates his words perfectly.

A few weeks later, 'tit Røx's 26 floats and three marching bands gather on oak-shaded St. Roch Avenue. The marchers sip tequila and *kombucha* tea as they admire their tiny assemblages. The theme this year: "Wee the People." Each float is a witty set piece on contemporary society, from selfies to senatorial sex scandals. Meadows and Detweiler arrive together but won't march together. "Some couples have separate bedrooms," says Detweiler. "We keep separate floats."

Suddenly, a "pace marshal," in a blue sash, shouts, "Let's roll!" One band starts in with an all-brass version of a Beastie Boys song. Haltingly, the floats' tiny wheels begin to jounce along the pavement. The route is lined with smiles, but Chamberlain is right: The spectators are locals, not tourists. They've set up dioramas of their own as homages to the minuscule march. One depicts a Lilliputian Velma, Scooby, and Shaggy.

"This is so AWESOME!" a boy shouts. It is.

The sun begins to set as the floats trundle along, glowing like neon signs with their LED lights. The parade ends at the side door of the Allways Lounge & Theatre, a cabaret bar serving as the site of the post-parade ball.

"Welcome, y'all, to my place," booms proprietress Zalia Beville in her best Liza Minnelli voice as footsore marchers head for drafts of Pabst Blue Ribbon. Guest marcher Curt Schulz, an Oregon schoolteacher, marvels at the gathering.

"In Portland this would be sanitized and sponsored by an organic sports-drink company," he says. "The garbage would get picked up and the sharp edges shaved down. But here it's all about sharp edges, and 'tit Røx—raw, sexy, colorful, on the edge of falling apart—fits in just fine."

Two days later I'm lunching with friends and describing the march through the Marigny twilight, the happy crowds, and the tiny homages lining the route.

"I don't think I've ever seen a parade like that," I say. "Ever."

"You missed the Chewbacchus krewe, with its twerking Princess Leias," someone replies. "That was something else."

CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

WHERE CREOLE CULTURE HOLDS SWAY

THE RIVER TOWN OF NATCHITOCHES (NA-ka-tesh) dates to 1714, when French traders paddling up the Red River from the Mississippi put down roots here, making it the oldest permanent settlement in the entire 828,000-square-mile Louisiana Purchase. It immediately impresses me as a downsized version of New Orleans' Royal Street, with its filigreed iron balconies, antiques stores, and art galleries. Natchitoches even has its own mini-Mississippi River: the Cane River, a 36-mile-long band of shimmering silver water that defines the surrounding Cane River National Heritage Area. Great plantations—Magnolia,



Exceptionalism defines the Cane River area, home to Melrose (above), a plantation founded in the 1800s by freed slave Louis Metoyer. Creole culture endures here: Metoyer descendant Betty Metoyer Roque and husband Charles Roque (below) visit his father's grave.



Oakland, Melrose—front either side of this twisting waterway, like base molecules attracted to a strand of antebellum DNA. But here, a seemingly upside-down world evolved, where plantation owners had African ancestry—and owned slaves. Among them was Marie Thérèse Coincoin, slave and mistress of Frenchman Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer, who would free her and their children, then deed her land. Their son Louis established Melrose, modest by plantation standards but extraordinary for the change it represented. It was another African-American woman, cook and self-taught artist Clementine Hunter, who would bring Melrose renown with folk paintings she began crafting in the 1930s, when she was in her 50s.

Wandering the plantation's grounds, with its African- and French-influenced outbuildings built by slaves, I feel dislodged from the present day.

"Natchitoches and the Cane River? We're in a time of our own," asserts Tom Whitehead, the area's unofficial ambassador who, if you're lucky like me, will ask you to his house for shrimp and grits—overseen by Clementine Hunter artworks, depicting daily plantation scenes, on his wall. "We appreciate differences."

Different this region is. Take the line of cars idling to buy frozen daiquiris at Maggio's, a drive-through liquor store. Or the farmers in muddy boots and Wrangler jeans sipping \$15 glasses of Cab at Janohn's, a restaurant in a renovated cotton gin in nearby Boyce. The past is very present in Natchitoches. I encounter Lisa and Michael Prud'homme at Mama's Oyster House, on Front Street, where the zydeco music is loud enough to ripple your beer. Born along the Cane, Michael Prud'homme returned home with Lisa after a big-city career.

"We've moved around a lot, but we're done. We're in our 'dying house' now," Prud'homme says.

Our dying house. Prud'homme's ancestors arrived here in the 1720s. He and his siblings, heirs to Oakland, one of the major Cane plantations, sold it to the National Park Service so it could be preserved for a nation forgetful of its rural roots and ways.

"To connect with that time," Prud'homme's sister, Kathy, tells me, "visit St. Augustine's, a Catholic church and the center of local Creole life, in nearby Isle Brevelle. It's having a birthday celebration for Grandpère Augustin Metoyer tonight. Go."

The fact that Grandpère Augustin—son of Marie Thérèse—died in 1856 isn't affecting the party. Metoyer is revered along the Cane River as the founder of the Creole community and as the builder, with his brother Louis, of the original St. Augustine church. It burned down in the 1800s and was replaced by today's white wooden structure. St. Augustine's parking lot, when I arrive at 6 p.m., is as packed as its cemetery grounds with generations of Metoyers, Balthazars, Roques.

Creole identity is complex. In this part of Louisiana it describes a person descended from some mix of French and Spanish settlers, Africans, and Native Americans. Tonight,

Cypresses surround Hamilton Hall as he searches Atchafalaya waters for his kind of buried treasure: sunken cypress logs, felled decades ago and now used to fashion furniture.



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DO IT**

Visit New Orleans, with a camera, on National Geographic Expeditions' Weekend Photo Workshop; ngexpeditions.com/neworleans.





Boots scoot to live zydeco music each Sunday afternoon at Whiskey River Landing, a waterside dance hall in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Charles Roque will play the role of gray-haired Grandpère Augustin. He's the mirror image of the patriarch who stands tall in a portrait painted more than a century ago and hanging on one of the church walls. That's no surprise. Roque grew up on the Cane. His wife, Betty, is a Metoyer.

"Charles is an old-school river man," Roque's son-in-law Larry Atteridge whispers to me as I navigate the hall. "They don't get deeper than that, and that's a fact."

As night descends, the party gets going. Out back, men fry the last of 49 white perch, or sacalait, fished from the Cane River that morning as they listen to the New Orleans Saints game on the radio. Inside, deviled eggs, mac 'n' cheese, black-eyed peas, and 50 gallons of steaming gumbo are placed on the table. I'm introduced to Miss Nazy Metoyer LaCour, who baked Grandpère's huge vanilla birthday cake, slathering it with blue icing and layering it with pineapple slices and locally grown pecans. At a table behind the cake sit "the elders," 12 men and women over 80 who are being honored. The bar is serving beer, shots of Old Crow, and Long Island iced teas, dispensed by a cheerful woman who warns that her generous pours will soon have me "acting single and seeing double."

When the amplified music revs up, young and old Cane River natives start a line dance. It soon strikes me that no one here wants to be anywhere else. Everyone is in this moment—a moment of its own along the Cane River. Just as Tom Whitehead had predicted.

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

SWAMP ROMP

I'M IN A FLOATING CABIN—a wooden houseboat—sliding between cypress trees under a brooding afternoon sky that is darkening by the second, and I'm spooked. I can almost hear snakes slithering across the tree limbs and alligators sluicing through the mocha-colored water. The Atchafalaya Basin, a million acres of wetlands and mystery between New Orleans and Lafayette, is no place to be during a storm.

"The Atchafalaya system is a gigantic thing," naturalist Jim Delahoussaye had warned me earlier that day at his house, a replica of a Cajun cottage on the levee southeast of Lafayette. "And there's no easy access to or exit from it."

I'd stopped by Delahoussaye's because the water-pollution biologist, who traces his ancestry to the courtiers of Louis XVI on his father's side and Cajun swamper on his mother's, now studies this, the largest river swamp in the nation. Coffee steamed in the kitchen. Out a window hung a bird feeder; at least 12 of the basin's 270 bird species pecked at seeds. Beyond, a dock led to the Atchafalaya River, the waterway from which Delahoussaye and like-minded others draw inspiration and a living.

Among them is my fellow houseboat passenger, Hamilton Hall, a long-haired furniture maker who comes regularly to the

Continued on page 94

THE INSIDER

Louisiana

THERE IS LOCAL COLOR, and then there is Louisiana color. The Pelican State venerates all that is homegrown and unique to its watery flatlands, from Bayou Teche beer to brisk zydeco music—and, of course, New Orleans' Mardi Gras.

NEW ORLEANS

If the Bywater is New Orleans' bohemian district, **Booty's Street Food** is its mess hall. The restaurant, all wood and metal, serves street food inspired by the world travels of owners Kevin Farrell and Nick Vivion and their staff. Also on tap: a menu for "day drinking." In fact, some say that drinking rivals dining for popularity in the Crescent City. **Barrel Proof**, newly uncorked in the Lower Garden District, pours more

than 140 bourbons and whiskeys, along with 60 types of beer. Jazz fans and gourmands gravitate to **Little Gem Saloon**, a music and supper club on the same block where native son Louis Armstrong played. For lodging, the **French Quarter W** distinguishes itself with guest rooms that channel New Orleans through wall-size prints and mod lighting. Birds of a different color, the seven luxe **Audubon Cottages**



offer bedroom suites, with butler, around a courtyard pool; in the 1820s, namesake naturalist/artist John James Audubon stayed in Number 1.

CANE RIVER AREA

Melrose Plantation, founded by freed slaves two centuries ago, brings the area's unusual multicultural legacy to life at its nine historic buildings. A highlight here: the primitive-style artworks painted by onetime Melrose cook Clementine Hunter. Head to **Lasyone's**, in downtown Natchitoches, for the city's signature meat pie, a turnover stuffed with ground beef, pork, and onion. For oysters, crawfish, catfish, even alligator, score a table in the whimsically decorated

Mama's Oyster House.

Guests at **Violet Hill B&B**, a Victorian along the Cane River, awake to river views. Area lore fills exhibits at Natchitoches's new **Northwest Louisiana History Museum**.

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

The best—some say only—way to explore the Atchafalaya is on a houseboat. I rented mine in Henderson, from **Houseboat Adventures**. Land-lubbers in search of lodging (with a tuneful twist) should tool west to Lafayette and the **Blue Moon Saloon and Guesthouse**, a Cajun-inspired hostel where the music is first-rate and the beers ice cold. Sunday afternoons bring live music and livelier dancing to **Whiskey River Landing**, a venue in

Breaux Bridge. Cajun cooks transform the morning's catch into evening meals at **Pat's Fisherman's Wharf Restaurant**, in Henderson, which has plated seafood gumbo, oysters, and crawfish étouffée since 1952.

ATLAS



New Orleans held the first documented opera performance in the U.S., in 1796.

Louisiana state law still refers to the 19th-century Napoleonic Code.

The omelet cooked yearly at Louisiana's Giant Omelette Celebration requires more than 5,000 eggs.

BEHIND THE SHOT

PEOPLING AN IMAGE

"This mural of the late New Orleans musician Ernie K-Doe sums up the spirit of the city," says photographer Kris Davidson. "To make it sing, I envisioned someone biking by; locals often decorate their rides in creative ways. When I met artist Sam Wedderburn, with a bike he made, I had my image. He pedaled as I ran behind snapping, focusing on the spatial relationship of the elements in the frame."



Crescent City cyclorama



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Louisiana

Continued from page 92

Atchafalaya to harvest "sinker" cypress, old-growth timber felled a century ago that ended up sinking while being transported through the murky water.

As I tuck into our lunch of cheese and boudin, Louisiana's trademark sausage, I catch Hall staring at the vast swamp. The rippling water reflects the dark sky. A sense of timelessness, of deep serenity is settling around us. It is at this moment that I begin to grasp what living on the Atchafalaya must feel like.

The area has long been home to the Cajuns, descendants of French Canadians (Acadians) expelled from Canada by British forces in the 1750s, who made their way south to the more welcoming French territory of Louisiane. Their progeny kept the native language, and a version is spoken to this day. Once here, Cajuns thrived on the abundant wildlife, from catfish, crawfish, and alligators to otters, beavers, turkeys, and Louisiana black bears.

The houseboat, rented from Houseboat Adventures, is being nosed through the water by a tow piloted by Houseboat Adventures owner Mitch Mequet. We have hot water, a toilet, a generator, but no motor. The very best feature, to me, is the view gliding past our front porch. The landscape is both familiar and alien, Monet's "Water Lilies" meets *Jurassic Park*. Fish jump and bubbles roil the floating vegetation. Herons and egrets flutter and take flight through stands of tapering cypresses rising from the mist like Javanese dancers, branches akimbo and draped with Spanish moss.

"If you want," Mequet says, "I'll get my airboat and give y'all a tour in it. It can get way back in the cypress forests. You can consider it a little lagniappe." Lagniappe is the Cajun French word for a little something extra.

When Mequet returns, we scramble onto the airboat, the engine roars, and soon we're skimming the water's surface at 25 miles an hour. We enter a murky grove carpeted with duckweed. Mequet cuts the engine. Around us, cypresses soar in air the color of pewter.

"All new growth," Hall tells us. Old-growth cypresses and tupelos were cut 80 years ago to fashion stately front

doors for New Orleans and Natchez.

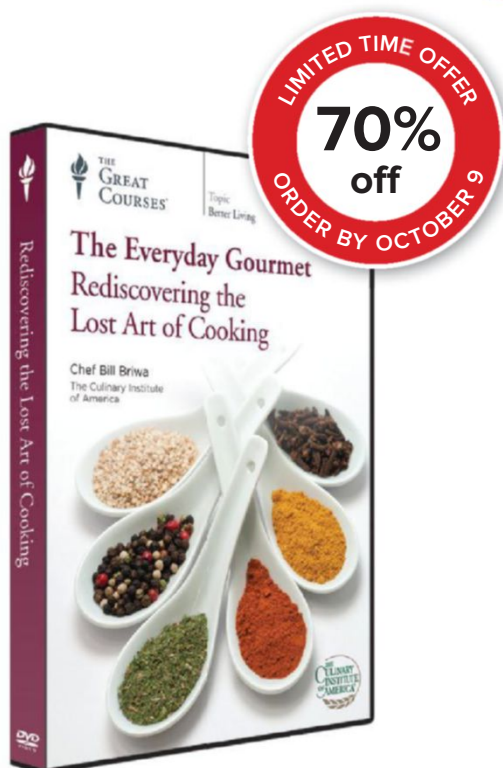
"It's amazing what you can find in these waters," Hall adds that evening as we sit on our porch nursing bottles of local Abita beer. "Hundred-year-old cisterns, timber from river camps. Search the levee tops after a storm and you will spot something: Spanish doubloons, daggers, wine from Prohibition days."

Prohibition shackled whiskey-loving New Orleans but had little real effect on those living here on the Atchafalaya; its watery reaches kept much of the world at bay, encouraging the flowering of a very local culture—and the swamp music known as zydeco, which is playing full tilt when we pull up to the Whiskey River Landing dance hall the following day. The ramshackle roadhouse perched at the edge of the basin in Henderson draws locals and visitors alike with its romping live music and crowded dance floor. Inside, loud doesn't even begin to describe the whoops and stomps as feet puzzle through the distinctive side-stepping and twirling of zydeco dancing, which has roots in Acadian folk tradition. Boots scrape floorboards as partners pirouette to the fast-tempo beat of Jeffery Broussard & the Creole Cowboys. Accordions, washboards, and fiddles deliver a cultural mash-up of folk, swamp, and rhythm and blues music that could happen only in this steamy Louisiana outpost.

The music is joyous, transforming a gloomy day into a burst of spirited warmth. Before I know it, I am on the floor dancing with everyone else.

Perhaps it's their relative isolation that makes Atchafalayans so eager to share their world. I just know the beat is making everyone break into grins. I cast back to Chamberlain's warning that Louisiana is endangered, being diluted by the 21st century, becoming like everywhere else. The Atchafalaya, its people, and its music are actively defying his admonition. Watching the musicians beam as they play on, I know that here on the water, Louisiana—quirky and continuously surprising—is still hitting the right notes.

Contributing editor **ANDREW NELSON** teaches at Loyola University in New Orleans. The city also is a home base for photographer **KRIS DAVIDSON**.



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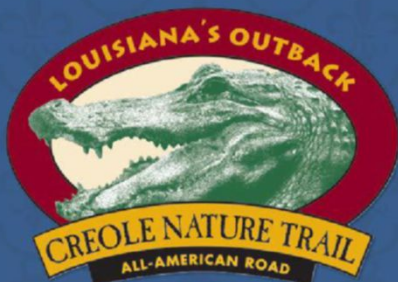
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Bogotá

Continued from page 57

breezy, alive with sleekly attired young women, and men sporting combed-back hair. Every other car seems to be a taxi disgorging couples for festivities that are just starting. It's exciting to watch all this, although, dressed in jeans and a bomber jacket, I'm feeling terribly deficient in Latin flair. I'm also at least a decade older than most of those I see.

Then I remember where I'm going: the wood-beamed, umber-walled Casa de Citas Café Arte. I step into the jeans-friendly club with a Venezuelan friend, Nelvis Navas, who does have Latina flair. A liveried waiter, whom I recognize from an earlier visit, motions to us. We cross the tiled dance floor to a table and take seats. The place echoes with warm-up taps on bongos and tentative trumpet toots as musicians on the small stage prepare for the night's entertainment. Patrons here appear to differ from the partygoers outside. Many of the men wear horn-rimmed glasses and cotton scarves, rakishly tossed back; women strut cloche hats and fingerless gloves. They aren't smoking but look as if they should be.

"Bohemians," says Navas. Bogotá has, of late, become one of her favorite cities, mostly because of La Candelaria.

"Walking around here," she'd told me earlier, "I feel a sense of tranquillity, of being taken into the past," nothing like her native Caracas, an overbuilt modern capital. "In Bogotá they take care of the historical sights, especially the Bolívar ones. In Venezuela, though Bolívar was born there and was so important to Hugo Chávez, we just let everything go."

In all my days in La Candelaria, I've felt most at home here, in Casa de Citas, the "house of rendezvous." I've visited it several times, to talk politics and books over bottles of grapy Spanish *tempranillo* with owner Carlos Adolfo González.

"Did it ever serve as a brothel, as the name implies?" I ask González. It's easy to imagine painted ladies beckoning to boozed-up patrons.

He smiles. "That is a fabrication. This was a family house." However, he adds, the association is in a way apt. "I'm trying out a different concept of brothel here, one involving men and women getting

together, yes, but for drinks, music, dancing, and *tertulias* [literary chats]."

"Tertulia" is not a word one hears a lot anymore, but it suits Casa de Citas, now the hangout of some of Colombia's great poets. González, a rail-thin impresario with fervent brown eyes whose loves are music and verse, has seen to that. Famed Colombian bard Juan Manuel Roca is Casa's current muse and a frequent host of literary soirees. The poet and cultural activist María Mercedes Carranza, who helped draft Colombia's modern-day constitution, came here until she ended it all in 2003 with a fistful of pills—in despair, some maintain, over her nation's violent conflicts.

A server brings us a starter of toasted and salted corn called *cancha tostada*. The cuisine here is Peruvian; in La Candelaria, sophistication does not, I realize, require European influences.

When our sevice entrée—marinated in lemon juice, cilantro, and onion—arrives, the server leaves us something else: a jar of *aji* sauce, pickled, viscid, and fiery, brimming with garlic cloves. Just a touch of it burns my tongue. I spoon it lavishly over my seafood.

The band, tuned up, starts in on a *salsa cubana*; the music draws the sober half of the crowd onto the dance floor. There is nothing more Latin than salsa—for which, alas, I am not perfectly suited. But as my mouth ignites, I can't stop watching the couple next to us as they dance, the nimbly spinning woman, the fluid yet precise stepping of her partner. Suddenly, I'm seized by a sad thought: I'll never again have the sprezzatura of youth that would have allowed an honorable showing alongside these superb *salseiros*. Navas comes to the rescue.

"Her partner is dancing faster than the rhythm," she comments. "They are out of sync." She shakes her head. "He's not nearly as good as you think."

Then, perhaps, I am not as bad as I imagine.

Feeling impulsive—feeling, finally, like a Bogotano—I decide I'll hit the dance floor after all.

JEFFREY TAYLER's most recent book is *Topless Jihadis: Inside Femen, the World's Most Provocative Activist Group* (Atlantic ebooks, 2013). **RAYMOND PATRICK** has photographed in more than 300 cities.

THE INSIDER

La Candelaria

CHANGE IS COMING rapidly to Bogotá, with the spread of European-style cuisine and lodgings—a matter of pride among Bogotanos. Yet the capital of Colombia remains resolutely local, especially in the old Candelaria neighborhood.

WHERE TO STAY

Two blocks from the Botero Museum sits **Hotel Casa Deco**, a modern inn that stands out with its color-themed rooms, deco style, and—for lovers of live music—proximity to Casa de Citas Café Arte; from \$101. In the middle of La Candelaria but on a quiet street you'll find Italian-owned **Abadia Colonial**, cast from a traditional Colombian residence. Rooms, simply furnished in period style, look out on a courtyard. Also notable: a glass-roofed dining area. From \$68. Closer to the Plaza de Bolívar you'll come upon the luxe **Hotel de la Opera**, in a grand, colonial-era stone

edifice with its own thermal spa; from \$209. Those staying outside La Candelaria should try the homey **Hotel Casona del Patio**, in Chapinero, a quarter known for its bars; from \$67.

WHERE TO EAT

Stylish dining and expansive views make **Restaurante Casa San Isidro**, on Monserrate and reachable by cable car, a fine bet for an introductory meal in Bogotá; the menu, on the pricey side, runs from French classics (bouillabaisse, duck terrine) to Colombian favorites. The folksy, popular **Casa de Citas Café Arte** draws big weekend crowds with live music, salsa

dancing, and Peruvian dishes; try the sevice with hot *aji* pepper sauce. Looking for a romantic hideaway? Head to **El Gato Gris**, just off Plazoleta del Chorro de Quevedo, and order *empanaditas* paired with absinthe, which, the menu says, will help you “see things as you wished they were.” Playful and intimate **El Patio** earns kudos for its candlelit ambience and Italian fare. You

will taste country cooking the way it was prepared in Bolívar's day at **La Puerta Falsa**, founded in 1816. If it's full, check out two like-minded eateries nearby: the **Antigua Santa Fe** and **La Puerta de la Tradición**, where you can sample Bogotano favorites such as *ajiaco*, a chicken-based stew.

WHAT TO KNOW

Temperate weather reigns in Bogotá; the

driest conditions occur from December into March. Many newcomers feel the effects of Bogotá's altitude (8,660 feet); common symptoms include shortness of breath, difficulty sleeping, and mild dizziness. Acclimation usually occurs within a few days; limiting alcohol consumption aids the transition.

OUT AND ABOUT: MUSEUMS BOGOTÁ GEMS

Bogotá's **Museo Botero** may be one of the most entertaining art museums anywhere, filled with Colombian artist Fernando Botero's works depicting oversize figures, some with sly social commentary. For all that glitters, visit the **Museo del Oro** (Museum of Gold), where the metal that lured Europe's explorers shows the workmanship of indigenous peoples. Almost as dazzling, but in service to God, is the interior of the **Museo Iglesia Santa Clara**, a church museum filled with frescoes and paintings.



Museo del Oro



ATLAS



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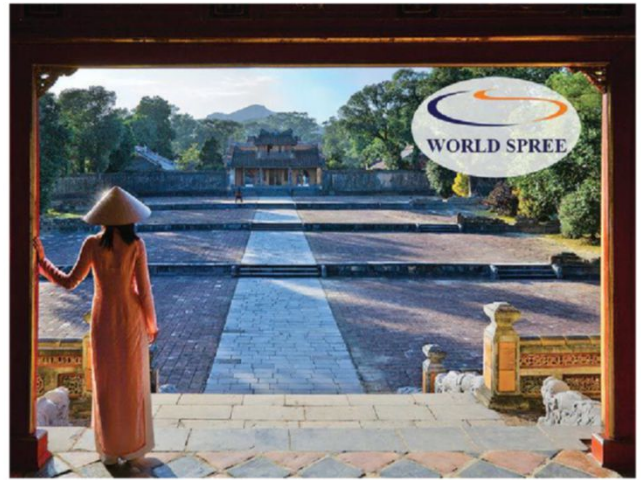


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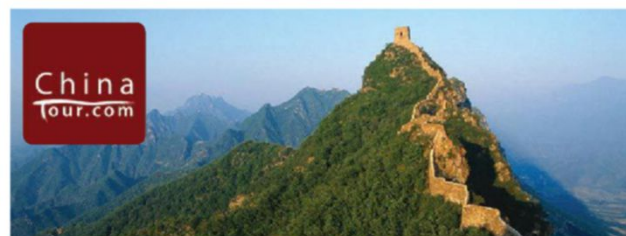
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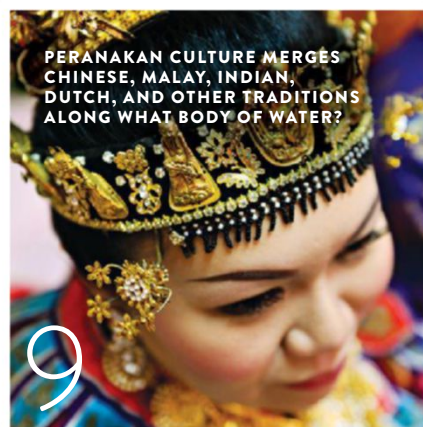
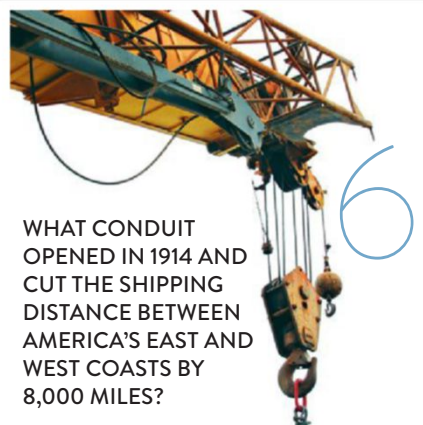
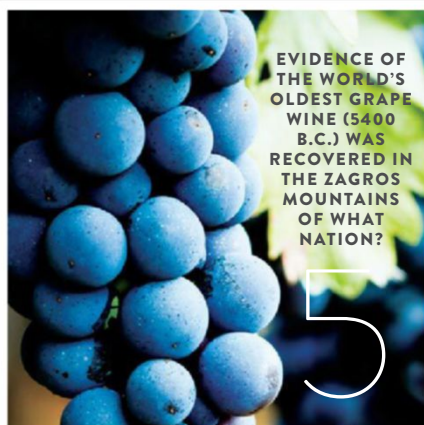
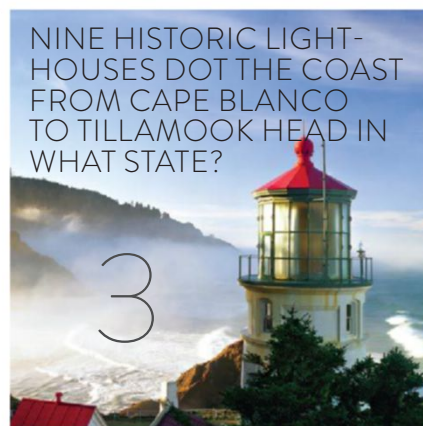
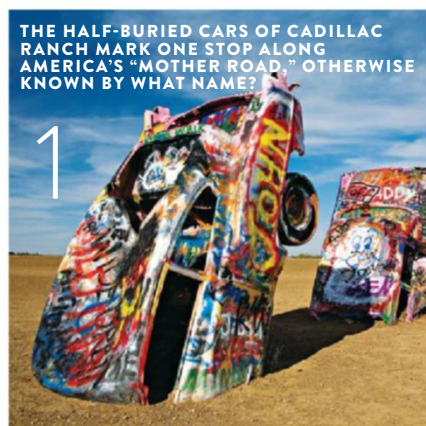
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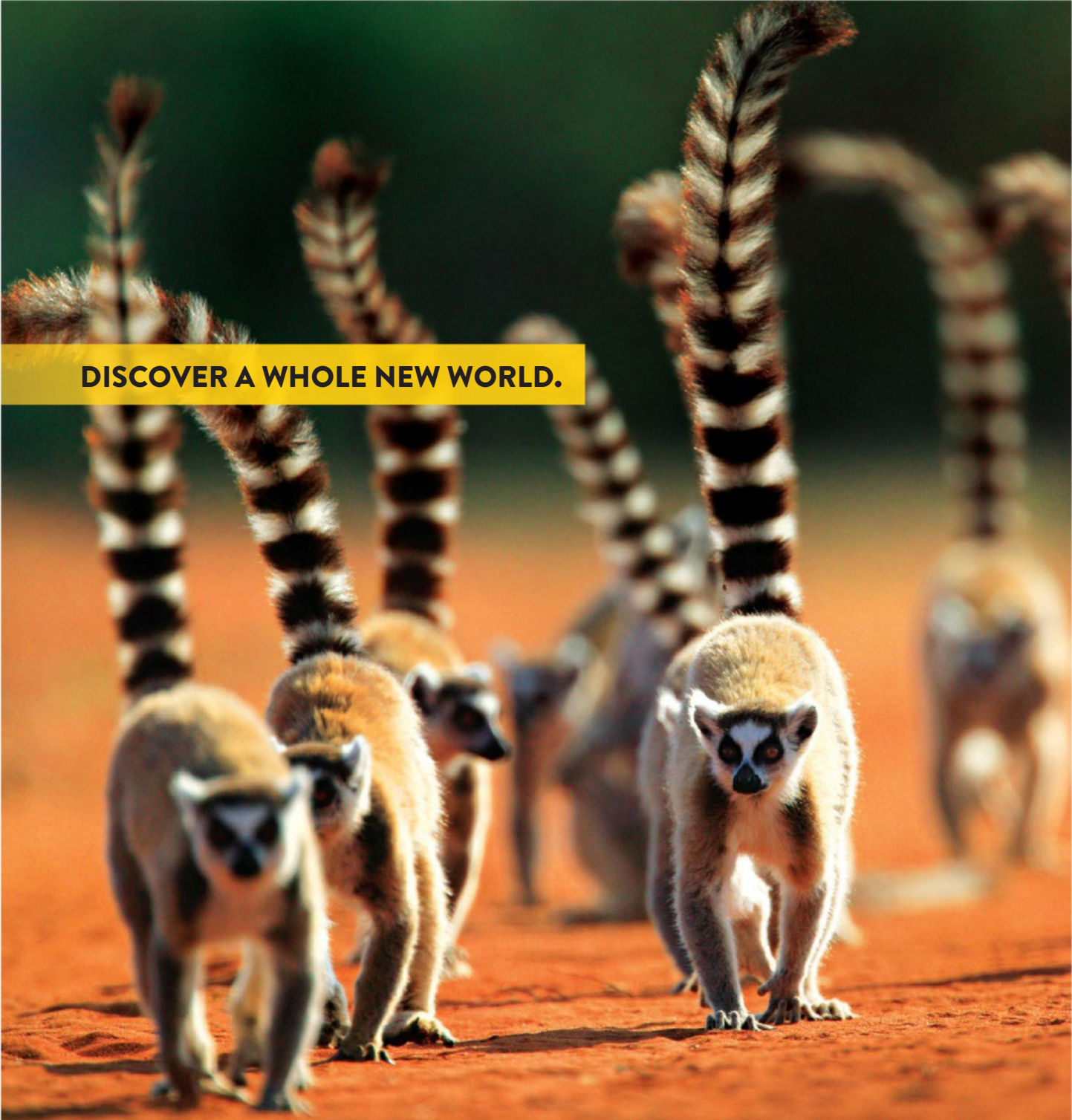
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